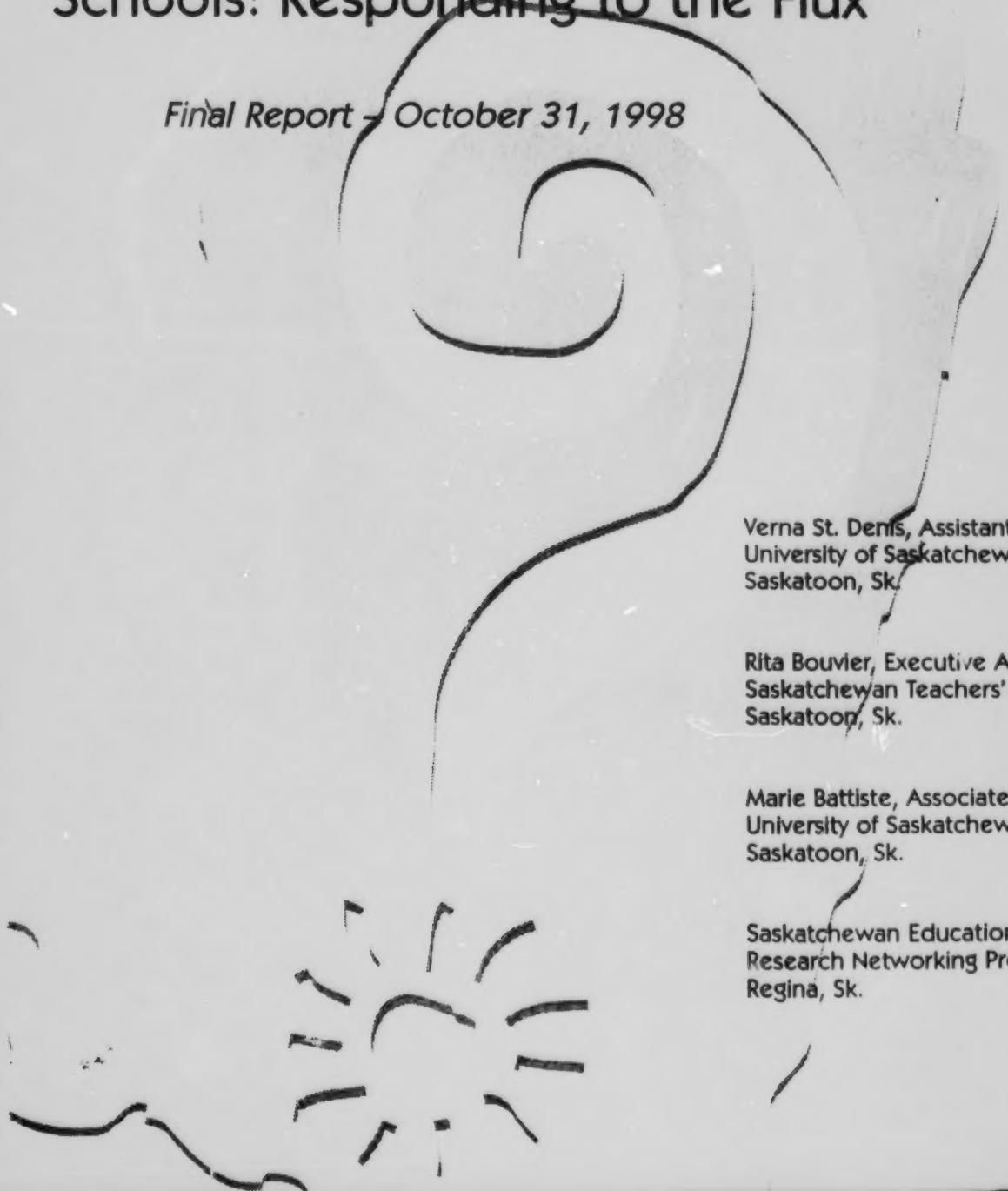
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Okiskinahamakewak : Aboriginal teachers in Saskatchewan's publicly funded schools : responding to the flux : final report

Okiskinahamakewak – Aboriginal Teachers in Saskatchewan's Publicly Funded Schools: Responding to the Flux

Final Report – October 31, 1998



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Executive Summary

The need to understand more about the experiences of Aboriginal teachers comes after twenty-five years of Aboriginal teacher education programs in Canada and the call for greater numbers of Aboriginal teachers to be hired by the current Saskatchewan publicly funded school system. This study funded by Saskatchewan Education seeks to identify significant experiences and relationships of Aboriginal teachers in the public school system.

The researchers, each of whom are Aboriginal educators in Saskatchewan, have used a combination of research processes, including a literature review, a general survey of 106 Aboriginal teachers in the publicly funded school system in Saskatchewan, interviews with 20 Aboriginal teachers within the publicly funded school system, and two talking circles of Aboriginal teachers in Saskatoon and Regina involving 20 teachers.

Three hundred and thirty-one teachers have self declared as Aboriginal which comprises 2.6% of the total teaching population of 10,134 Saskatchewan teachers in 1996-97 publicly funded schools. A survey of 315 of these Aboriginal Teachers in Saskatchewan publicly funded schools identified through the records of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation netted a return rate of 27% or 106 teachers. Based on the information received from the teachers surveyed, the researchers identified a sample of teachers based on such critieria as location of teaching, both geographical and teaching placement, years of teaching experience, age, gender, Aboriginal affiliation, language skills and teacher training background. The second phase of this study was to interview a selected sample of Aboriginal teachers who had returned the completed surveys and who had volunteered to be interviewed.

Literature Review

A literature review completed in the first phase of the study helped to frame the direction of the interviews and the talking circles. An exploration of the literature revealed many common experiences, although there were also particular experiences and concerns distinct to specific groups. The similiar kinds of expectations placed on both Aboriginal and minority teachers included: the assumption that their racial or cultural identity alone would make them effective teachers; that they would be able to solve all the problems confronting disempowered youth and their communities; that they alone can eradicate racism or have special knowledge about how to effectively challenge it. In addition, the literature also revealed the political nature of the work minority teachers engage in as they strive to bridge the gap between school and community, to being advocates of students and to regard students in a holistic manner that considers their emotional, spiritual and physical as well as academic needs. As indicated in the literature, many minority and Aboriginal teachers seek to have their work considered within the larger sociopolitical context, as racism, poverty, resistance to employment and educational equity all limit the contributions these teachers can make.

Survey, Interview and Talking Circle Findings

The survey, interviews, and talking circles indicated Aboriginal teachers in publicly funded schools in Saskatchewan have diverse identities, cultural experiences, affiliations, knowledges, and skills that they bring into their professional lives. Most teachers surveyed and interviewed grew up in rural and urban communities with varying degrees of ties with other Aboriginal relatives, people and communities. These experiences had varying impacts on their identity as Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal teacher respondents represented a diverse group, most of whom were a group of young professionals, graduated from publicly funded schools and

from a university with a professional certificate and bachelor of education degree, and who predominately taught in urban or rural non-reserve or Metis communities. For most of the teachers, their own educational experience were uniformly assimilative in nature. The language findings indicate that Aboriginal languages are rapidly being eroded among First Nations speakers in Saskatchewan, especially among students and teachers in the public and urban schools system. With the present limited pool of Aboriginal teachers who are fluent in the languages and trained in formal language teaching, the problem of finding available Aboriginal teachers to teach Aboriginal languages in the public schools will be further magnified.

Aboriginal teacher education programs have largely contributed to the increasing availability of Aboriginal teachers in the Saskatchewan publicly funded schools. In addition to enriching the lives of the majority of Aboriginal teachers, TEPs have served the province well by increasing their representation in the teaching profession. The academic, social, and financial support provided through the TEPs has been instrumental in many Aboriginal people deciding to become teachers. Aboriginal teachers represent much diversity within and among their groupings, but they are often treated in the schools as a homogenous group. Administrators and staff often expect that Aboriginal teachers have similiar experiences and knowledges, despite their diverse socialization and contexts in which they were raised. Many teachers also felt that stereotyping of Aboriginal people went hand in hand with negative perceptions, such as having low expectation of Aboriginal students and teachers, and assigning negative caricatures to Aboriginal parents. In many cases, Aboriginal teachers were expected to fulfill the role of both classroom teacher and cultural broker for their group on a full range of issues that arose in schools concerning a diverse Aboriginal student populations, curriculum content, administration and mediation between the school and Aboriginal parents.

Teachers also expressed dismay in the high numbers of Aboriginal students being designated resource and special needs. These labels and negative assumptions of the skills and talents of Aboriginal children continue to effect their performance. Many of the teachers we interviewed have, like their students, lived and continue to live highly stressed personal lives.

Aboriginal teachers, like all other teachers responsible for the implementation of Core Curriculum need proper administrative and professional support to carry out their work in the classroom and in the broader context of a collegial environment in the school. The context in which all teachers carry out their professional roles concerning the goal for equity, especially those teachers who identify as Aboriginal people, is immensely challenging. Given these responsibilities, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal teachers need to continue to have professional development opportunities to support implementation of the policies, programs and practices that Saskatchewan Education initiatives seek to put in place. As with any change envisioned in the educational system, the needs of teachers will vary depending on their levels of confidence, experience and education.

Aboriginal teachers view Aboriginal knowledge as specialized knowledge, which many elders have tried to explain is not merely gleaned from being "Native" or from having an interest in the topic. A course in Native Studies is not enough to link Aboriginal knowledge, nor is one language course enough to teach a language. The teachers in this study felt the need for educational consultants with specialized knowledge in Aboriginal knowledge and communities, history, ethics and protocols, and pedagogies be put in place to support all teachers in the implementation of policy to integrate Indigenous knowledge and perspectives.

We also heard that Aboriginal parents and communities can test Aboriginal teachers. On one hand, Aboriginal parents often demand that Aboriginal teachers prove themselves as being equally capable as their non-Aboriginal colleagues. On the other hand, Aboriginal parents may have elevated expectations of them, adding further responsibilities to counsel and mediate for them. Another challenge facing Aboriginal teachers in publicly funded schools is the dismissal of or resistance to Aboriginal content by non-Aboriginal students and/or their parents. Despite these challenges Aboriginal teachers per-

ceive that they are making a significant contribution to education and feel strengthened and motivated by Aboriginal students' learning and successes, and by supportive administrators and teachers, and appreciative parents and communities.

Given the difficult and complex environment that Aboriginal teachers must negotiate in terms of their professional role, the responses of principal and vice-principals are pivotal to the adjustment that Aboriginal teachers make to the school culture and educational system as a whole. They can be supportive or they can undermine or overburden Aboriginal teachers. Aboriginal teachers report many incidences of strain in staff rooms as they attempt to fulfill the high and sometimes conflicting expectations in the schools and within the communities they teach. Despite these kinds of experiences Aboriginal teachers expressed a sense of responsibility to be supportive of their colleagues. Leadership for change can come from many areas in the school, but if the expectation is that teachers have post-graduate degrees in order to assume leadership positions in schools, then Aboriginal teachers will continue to be overlooked for these positions. Saskatchewan Education needs to consider some means to enable Aboriginal people, especially Metis and non-status Indians to access financial resources to continue their education at the post-graduate level. The findings of this review highlighted the crisis and challenge presented by the education of Aboriginal people.

Education Equity has thus provided an important vehicle for change in Aboriginal education in this province, particularly for school divisions with high Aboriginal student populations. Saskatchewan Education has developed laudable initiatives for Aboriginal education; however, many of these initiatives may have not been adequately communicated to the schools and to teachers in particular. Many teachers interpret educational equity as additive and supplementary. How these initiatives affect the political cultural climate of schools and relationships among teachers, students, and communities have not been adequately attended to.

Despite all the challenges to them, minority and Aboriginal teachers manage to realize to some degree the goals and aspirations they have as teachers, which is recognized by school administration. But more generally, there remains a need to acknowledge the role that power and domination play in the lives of Aboriginal teachers, the wide spread pervasiveness of racism in schools and society that continues to limit Aboriginal peoples.

Summary of Recommendations

We recommend that Saskatchewan Education:

- assume leadership in coordinating and sustaining a critical dialogue of the efficacy of its policies and directives concerning Aboriginal education;
- collaboratively clarify the purpose of Aboriginal education and its goals, and the role and responsibility teachers and administrators have in addressing these goals,
- involve Aboriginal people through their organizations, elders, and communities;
- continue efforts to diversify the teaching population and boards of education,
- pay particular attention to how racism shapes and influences responses to Aboriginal education and educators,
- through its partnerships continue to support and promote professional growth opportunities in the areas of equity,
- explore further with school divisions and with the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation through its structures, opportunities for networking among Aboriginal teachers and like minds where there are significant numbers of Aboriginal teachers,
- provide Aboriginal consultants as a means of providing on-going support to school divisions, schools and teachers in the implementation of the initiatives for Indian and Metis Education in Core Curriculum,
- collaboratively establish how Aboriginal content is to be situated in curriculum, and what programs

and initiatives can best support these directives,

- develop a strategy to address the issue surrounding appropriate protocols and sensitivities to the appropriation of Indigenous knowledge in relation to what constitutes Native Studies,
- create partnerships with Aboriginal communities and elders to facilitate teachers' access to Indigenous knowledge and skills,
- provide funding for research and resources to enhance Aboriginal language programming,
- encourage through their partnerships with universities the development of Aboriginal languages as an area of study for specialization which includes courses in linguistics, literature and language teaching methodology.
- communicate the resulting collective understanding and the purposes of Aboriginal educational initiatives not only to administrators and teachers but also to the broader public to help create awareness and support for the proposed changes,
- develop regular review mechanisms to monitor how equity initiatives are translated into practices.



Introduction

Twenty-five years of Aboriginal teacher education programs in Canada and a growing population of Aboriginal peoples in Saskatchewan, together with the call for greater numbers of Aboriginal teachers to be hired into the publicly funded school system, have created a need to understand more about the experiences of Aboriginal teachers within the current public school system. Saskatchewan Education initiated and funded this study that seeks to identify the experiences and attitudes of Aboriginal teachers in the publicly funded school system. This work was undertaken by three Aboriginal researchers. As Aboriginal professionals working in the education system and, in the context of the professional growth and training of teachers, we, the principal investigators of this study, have a sincere and committed interest in discovering how teacher education and professional organizations can maximize the opportunities for Aboriginal teachers in their professional lives.

This qualitative research study seeks to identify significant experiences and relationships of Aboriginal teachers in the publicly funded school system. Research processes included a literature review, a survey of Aboriginal teachers in the public school system in Saskatchewan, interviews with a representative sample of Aboriginal teachers within the public school system, and two talking circles of Aboriginal teachers in Saskatoon and Regina. As we became acquainted with the experiences of Aboriginal teachers, it became evident that an understanding of the history of educational policy and initiatives in this province was necessary if we were to make sense of the issues and challenges. The recommendations, which would flow from our observations and analysis, would also be better understood. In examining Aboriginal teachers' experiences, relationships and attitudes, we explore the issues of Aboriginal culture, identity, knowledge, and ways of knowing that influence their perceptions, attitudes, and choices in teaching and how these experiences affect their relationships, performance and responsibilities, as teachers within the publicly funded schools. In addition, we seek to identify the factors that support or limit their professional growth and performance and understand what their visions for teaching are, what professional role models they draw on, and how they perceive their own roles and responsibilities within the school. Further, we sought to explore the kinds of support they receive and their perceptions about what promotes or limits their effectiveness as teachers. Finally, we sought to identify with them what solutions and recommendations would improve practice; inform decision-making and policy development; improve programs; and enhance teacher education; improve relationships with other teachers, administrators, and the communities they serve; and maximize the opportunities for their growth and development within the public school system.

This research among Aboriginal teachers will address four important gaps in present research on Aboriginal teachers, by the following: 1) expanding the existing literature that focuses on Aboriginal teachers in northern, isolated and predominantly Aboriginal communities; 2) providing a more balanced view of the various contexts in which Aboriginal teachers work, linking teachers' assumptions and expectations in their work to Aboriginal teacher training; 3) correcting the existing bias in research on Aboriginal teachers which assumes a relative homogeneity among them (e.g. Aboriginal teachers are assumed to have a wealth of Aboriginal cultural knowledge, to speak their language, and to be grounded in an Aboriginal community); and 4) correcting limitation in current research which characteristically employs non-Aboriginal researchers to work with Aboriginal teachers.

The researchers are three Aboriginal women educators in Saskatchewan. As researchers within the western tradition of science, we are all too aware of the critique of objectivity, recognizing as Lise Noel points out:

The disciplines seeking to give meaning to human relations cannot in every case invoke an impossible scientific absolute to impose definitive conclusions. Between the questions they ask and the theories they develop in response, researchers reveal the outside influence to which they are vulnerable, even in the type of facts they choose to observe (1994: 164).

In other words all research is vulnerable to the perspectives and context within which research is conducted, just as we also recognize that all knowledge and facts are not neutral. Recognizing that subjectivity in knowledge is inevitable, we feel it is important to reveal the diversity of interdependent identities within this research by offering these brief overviews of each of the researchers.

Dr. Marie Battiste is a Mi'kmaq educator from Nova Scotia who has been an education director, principal, teacher, curriculum developer, and classroom consultant. A graduate of the University of Maine, Harvard and Stanford Universities, she is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Foundations and Coordinator of the Indian and Northern Education Program at the University of Saskatchewan. She is directly involved in the educational training of teachers in Saskatchewan. She and her colleague Verna St. Denis teach the core course of First Nations and Cross Cultural Education, exploring issues of identity, diversity, racism, equity, anti racist and cross cultural teaching pedagogy. Dr. Battiste (with Jean Barman) is co-editor of *First Nations Education in Canada: The Circle Unfolds,* and has built her research interests in Indigenous knowledge, heritage, language and its intersection in educational policy and practice and interrelationship to contemporary educational theory and values. Her research translated as First Nations, cross-cultural, equitable, feminist and post-colonial education.

Ms. Verna St. Denis is a Cree and Metis educator from Saskatchewan who is a graduate of the Indian Teacher Education Program at the University of Saskatchewan. She is a former faculty and counsellor of the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Program in Regina, and the Indian Teacher Education Program at the University of Saskatchewan where she taught Cross Cultural, Indian Education, and Native Studies courses. She is currently Assistant Professor in Indian and Northern Education Program in the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan. Her masters thesis, obtained from the University of Alaska/Fairbanks, explored the challenges of doing community-based participatory research. She is a Ph.D. candidate in Social Sciences and Educational Practice at Stanford University. Her dissertation will explore constructions of culture, race and identity among Aboriginal educators. Verna is co-author of the recently published *Healing Makes Our Hearts Happy: Spirituality and Cultural Transformation among the Kalahai J/'hoansi.* She is a frequent speaker and workshop leader on topics of Aboriginal education, anti-racist education, and community-based research.

Ms. Rita Bouvier is a Metis educator from Saskatchewan, fluent in Michif/Cree. She was raised by her grandparents and an extended family in Ile a la Crosse. She has been a classroom teacher, the coordinator and subsequently the Director of the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program and is currently serving her fourteenth year as executive assistant in Professional Development at the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation. She has also served as a sessional lecturer in Cross Cultural Studies at the University of Saskatchewan. Rita has been invited to various provincial and national conferences and symposia to present papers and keynote addresses on equity - related topics and issues affecting Aboriginal people in education. She is one among many providing leadership in educational policy as it concerns Aboriginal people. Rita holds a B.Ed and M. Ed degree from the University of Saskatchewan. More recently she has been involved as a delegate to the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples in Geneva, Switzerland, representing Educational International, an umbrella organization for teacher unions and federations worldwide.

Review of Literature on Research of Minority Teachers

Little is known about the collective experience of Aboriginal teachers. The research that examines their experience is sparse: McNinch (1994) and Friesen and Orr (1995, 1996) are two most recent exceptions. In general, there is little research that draws on the experience and knowledge of any racial and ethnic minority teachers and other disempowered groups (Acker, 1995-96; Delpit, 1995; Lipman, 1996). Given the paucity of literature on these two groups, we considered both bodies of research in this review, since we have assumed that the common experience of disenfranchisement and disempowerment among both groups would lend itself to some overlap in their respective experiences in dealing with similar monocultural schooling structures. Therefore, in addition to the available literature on Aboriginal teachers, the literature on other minority and disempowered teachers are included.

For example, we have reviewed literature that discusses ethnic and racial minorities such as African American teachers (Casey, 1993; Delpit, 1995; Foster 1993, 1994, 1995; Gordon, 1997; Henry, 1992; Lipman, 1996); Black and Asian teachers in England (Bangar & McDermott, 1989; Singh Ghuman, 1995); Maori teachers (Mitchell & Mitchell, 1993); Australian Aboriginal teachers (Malin, 1994), Latino teachers (Allesaht-Snider, 1996; Galindo, 1996; Monsivais, 1990); research that considers teachers from more than one racialized group (Delpit, 1995; Hulsebosch & Koerner, 1994; Stallworth, 1994, Thiessen, Bascia & Goodson, 1996), racial immigrant teachers in Canada (Bascia, 1996b; Lam, C., 1996, Thiessen, Bascia & Goodson, 1996, Lam, M., 1996), women (Acker, 1995-96; Biklen, 1995); and lesbian and gay teachers (Khayatt, 1992;Sidaway, 1988).

Our literature reviews draw on research done in Canada, United States, Australia, New Zealand and Britain, including literature that explores Aboriginal teacher research literature in Saskatchewan and Canada (Baillie, 1994; Bouvier, 1984, 1990, 1991; Carnegie, 1991; Friesen and Orr, 1995a, 1996; Hesch, 1995; Katz & St. Denis, 1991; Leavitt, 1995; McNinch, 1994; Millard, 1993; More, 1981; Northern Teacher Education Program, 1987; Stairs, 1991; Vermette, 1995); and American Indian and Alaska Native teachers (Barnhardt, 1992; Collier, 1979; Delpit, 1995; Deyhle & Swisher, 1997; Erickson, & Mohatt, 1982; Lipka, 1991, 1994; Reyner, 1981; Van Hess, 1981). Finally, the literature review will be confined to research that highlights the voices and experiences of Aboriginal and minority teachers, specifically those teaching at the primary and secondary levels.

This literature review is organized around the research questions posed in this study. In particular, the literature reviewed will be used to explore the following areas in this order: 1) participants perception of the expectations placed on them by various members of their own respective communities of origin; 2) Aboriginal and minority teachers' own stated goals and visions, for example, their own motivation and sources of inspiration for entering and remaining in teaching, including their contributions currently attributed to such teachers; 3) aspects of culture and identity that impact their role as teacher; 4) their perceptions and reported experiences of relationships with non-Aboriginal white schooling personnel, students and parents as distinguished from fellow Aboriginal and minority school personnel, students and parents; and 5) the nature of existing challenges and recommendations for change.

Roles and Expectations

Educational policy statements, especially mission statements regarding Aboriginal and minority education, as well as educational institutions, have created a widely recognized set of roles and expectations for Aboriginal and minority teachers (More, 1981). Calls to diversify the teaching force are standard and are "predicated on the beliefs that racial minority and immigrant teachers' own experiences and socio-cultural locations will improve the quality of educational experiences of racial minority and immigrant students" (Bascia 1996a, p. 2). This is very similar to expectations made of Aboriginal teachers. For example, in the early 1970's the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB) issued a policy paper titled Indian Control of Indian Education which they advocated culturally relevant educational programming and emphasized the importance of community control in meeting the needs of Indian students. In addition, the NIB addressed the need for Indian teachers, stating, "Native teachers and counsellors who have an intimate understanding of Indian traditions, psychology, way of life and language are best able to create the learning environment suited to the habits and interests of the Indian child" (National Indian Brotherhood, 1971, p. 18). Thus began the proliferation of Aboriginal teacher education programs across Canada; in particular, Saskatchewan became the site for at least four distinct Aboriginal teacher education programs all predicated on a similar assumption.

Aboriginal teachers are aware of their unique place in the teaching profession, evident in their own descriptions of why they have entered the teaching profession. Often their primary goal is to provide positive experiences for both Aboriginal or their respective minority group children (Baillie, 1994; McNinch, 1994; Thiessen, Bascia & Goodson, 1996). As Aboriginal teachers they "seek to make sense of [their] traditions and allow students to experience their Native culture" (Friesen and Orr, 1995, p. 26).

At the same time Aboriginal teachers, like their minority immigrant colleagues, do not wish to be judged solely on their Aboriginality, or racial and ethnic identity (McNinch, 1994; Thiessen, Bascia & Goodson, 1996). For example, Baillie (1994) found that although a "few [Aboriginal teachers] saw themselves primarily as being cultural emissaries to the schools, the majority were concerned that they be seen as competent and knowledgeable educators of all children [emphasis in original]" (p. 31). McNinch (1994) also found that "Aboriginal teachers understand that they have special skills which benefit all students" (p. 29).

These teachers struggle to put in perspective the high demand placed on them and strive to be recognized simply as good teachers. However, not all teachers share the same characteristics, even when they are all Aboriginal, nor do they have the same talents and skills (Bouvier, 1990, 1991). Bouvier (1984) and Lam, C. (1996), both assert, for example, that a person's physical racial traits or other surface traits, as well as their Aboriginality, do not alone make him or her a good teacher. Bouvier suggests that "it is not enough to assume that because they are Native persons they will be effective teachers for Native learners" (1984, p. 71). One's ethnicity or Aboriginality does not necessarily translate into effective teaching.

Unrealistic and insensitive demands

Even more insidious is the tendency to see the Aboriginal and minority teacher are "as a custodian of a wide, sometimes ludicrous, set of problems" (Lam, C.,1996, p.36). This unrealistic and insensitive demand is reported widely. For example, Bouvier (1991) noted that Aboriginal teachers are held to very high expectations, and are expected to be able to solve all the issues facing the community. Monsivais (1990) found that the Latino teachers surveyed felt that they were "typecast into activities related to their ethnicity and these activities increased their workload beyond that of the average teacher" (p. 5). As one Asian immigrant teacher put it: "putting a green teacher in a school full of green kids does not make them happy green kids. Such a concept, as nearly all the teachers suggested, inflates the primacy of the one teacher, one student relationship; it denies the impact of family, community, and society on students' social, psychological, physical, and intellectual well-being; and it

ignores the importance of relationships among students and the many other adults who make a difference in students' school experience" (Bascia, 1996c, p. 171-172). Aboriginal and minority teachers struggle to have their work considered within the larger context of identity politics and educational change.

One noted expectation that is placed on Aboriginal and minority teachers is that they can reduce racism in the schools where they teach. But as Bangar and McDermott (1989) suggest, placing "isolated black teachers into racist environments is not necessarily going to challenge racism" (p. 147); a point made by others (Lipman, 1996, Mitchell & Mitchell, 1993). Bangar and McDermott (1989) amplify the complexity of this unrealistic expectation in regards to racism: "The desire to create 'positive' role-models for black pupils through employing a few more black teachers (but not too many) is fraught with dangers through the unrealistic expectation that a few individuals can change the racist environment in which we work and live" (p. 147). Clearly this is a challenge that must be taken up by more than a few teachers in schools.

Aboriginal and minority teacher struggle to be regarded as competent and able teachers (McNinch, 1994; Delpit, 1995). While Alaska Native teachers struggle to be regarded as "legitimate" (Lipka, 1994), Maori teachers are considered "second rate" (Mitchell & Mitchell, 1993). These Aboriginal teachers share the pressures of unrealistic expectations similar to those experienced by black teachers in England who also report an increasing pressure brought on by high expectations of new teachers, for "each mistake had repercussions far beyond [their] learning processes or personal standing. The assumption that [they] had no professional abilities was fulfilled" (Bangar & McDermott, 1989, p. 140). Not only do Aboriginal teachers have their professional capabilities questioned, but their teacher education is also considered by some to be inadequate (McNinch, 1994; Lipka, 1994; Malin, 1994).

As Aboriginal and minority teachers are simultaneously judged to be lacking as professionals, they are also are required to do the work of highly experienced consultants. They are often "used as a general resource and [are] expected to make decisions for other staff" (Bangar & McDermott, 1989, p. 141). This is a common experience and predicament reported by many other teachers (McNinch, 1994; Mitchell & Mitchell, 1993). In part the demands to be an expert is based on the stereotypic assumption that they are all the same or that they all know each other in an intimate way. Nonetheless, Aboriginal and minority teachers are expected to know everything there is to know about the group they are recognized as representing (Baillie, 1994; Bangar & McDermott, 1989). This expectation that these teachers know everything is compounded by their own acknowledgment that they "have a responsibility to make sense of [their] traditions and allow students to experience their Native culture" (Friesen and Orr, 1995, p. 26). When they are unable to fulfill the expectation of knowing all the answers or speaking for all their people, they are regarded as "failing" their people (Bangar & McDermott, 1989).

The source of the high expectations placed on Aboriginal teachers is an important issue to this study. Aboriginal teachers do view themselves as teachers with a special status, an identity placed on them while progressing through their teacher education programs, and then by school administrators who "hire them to not only transmit but to retrieve and create Aboriginal culture, teach from an Aboriginal perspective, fight racism, and be exemplary figures to both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. These high level expectations go far beyond being a competent teacher who happens to be Aboriginal" (McNinch, 1994, p. 76). Most teachers concede that they are not cultural brokers in all situations, nor are they equipped to answer all questions (Delpit, 1995; McNinch, 1994, Mitchell & Mitchell, 1993).

Racial and ethnic stereotypes seem to provide much of the dynamic behind these unrealistic expectations and the presumed judgments of failure among minority teachers. For example, one black male teacher reported that when educators "see a black man, that's not their idea of what a teacher is" (Bascia, 1996b, p. 93). Bangar & McDermott (1989) argue that "What one black person does is often used as a yardstick to measure all black people, usually in negative terms. ...[And this] tends to be generalized and maximized

when they reflect badly on us" (p. 140). So not only are minority teachers stereotyped but it is done in the most incriminating circumstances.

Another consequence of this stereotyping is that Aboriginal and minority teachers are not expected to succeed in positions of greater responsibility, such as administrative positions (Bascia, 1996c; Mitchell and Mitchell, 1993). Unfortunately, it appears that "minority teachers are systematically encouraged to assume teaching assignments that focus their efforts on minority populations and are discouraged in their attempts to assume broader administrative roles" (Bascia, 1996c, p. 165). In the lack of support to assume administrative positions, minority teachers remain limited in their ability to implement at least some of the changes they may consider appropriate. Since minority teachers play such an important role in education in meeting the needs of their respective constituents, the scale tips too far and minority teachers find "There is often a systematic channeling of minorities into special projects, where they direct and contain other minorities (Ortiz, 1982, in Acker (1995-96, p.124).

Conflicting demands, conflicting constituents

Lipka (1994) also found that Alaska Native teachers experience struggle with the conflicting values of their indigenous community and the values of publicly funded schools. Although ostensibly Alaska Native teachers are in the classroom to provide culturally relevant education, these teachers find that they are simultaneously expected to conform to the culture of the school (Lipka, 1994). He argues that perceptions of what constitutes a good teacher are determined by one's own cultural group, and that Alaska Native teachers are subjected to the cultural standards derived from the dominant culture, where success as a teacher demands they accept assimilative standards which deny Aboriginal languages and cultures (Lipka, 1994). Similarly, Australian Aboriginal teachers held "profound differences across cultures" which affect their perceptions of good teaching, the dominant culture "stressed task efficiency and academic substance" and Aboriginal culture, "other human relationships and belongingness" (Malin, 1996, p. 108).

Not only are Aboriginal teachers subject to mainstream institutional standards about what is considered good teaching, but they are also subject to the scrutiny of their own community that wants to ensure that they remain culturally relevant teachers (Baillie, 1994; Barnhardt, 1982; McNinch, 1994; Mitchell & Mitchell, 1993). The result is that they find themselves in a "psychological double bind, scrutinized by 'two pairs of eyes' the school and the village" (Lipka, 1994, p. 60). As cultural brokers, Aboriginal teachers are positioned between two worlds, a negotiation which results in intense conflicts between traditional and formal roles (Stairs, 1991).

Lipka (1991) illustrates how a Yup'ik teacher delicately balances his responsibility as a teacher against his knowledge of what is culturally appropriate (Millard, 1993, p. 14), a task also viewed as an "uncompromising tightrope". Ultimately, it is an issue of power—or powerlessness. As one Australian Aboriginal teacher put it, "For all the compromising you do, you still feel powerless. If you conform you do not seem to get anywhere either. If you confront you get branded as a troublemaker and if you try to compromise, you are still not listened to with respect. How to live? To walk the tightrope? Who to please? (Tucker, quoted by Malin, 1994, p. 113).

Goals, Visions and Purposes of Education

Having considered the expectations placed on Aboriginal and minority teachers, we turn to their own stated goals, visions, and purposes for assuming a teaching role. This part of the literature will consider Aboriginal and minority teachers' views of what they are trying to accomplish in their roles as teachers.

There is some conflicting perceptions of what is intended and what is accomplished by minority teachers. For example, Thiessen (1996) states that

"These teachers are distinguished from other teachers in their schools less by their pedagogy or commitment than by the intentions and circumstances that drive their practices and broaden their perspectives" (Thiessen, 1996, p. 141). Although there may be agreement that minority teachers intentions and certainly their circumstances impact their practices, Lipka (1994) and Malin (1994) would argue that Aboriginal teachers distinguish themselves through their pedagogy. This sentiment is also affirmed by Henry (1992) whose research with Canadian African women teachers calls for the "need to recognize alternative pedagogical intents and strategies that are context specific and rooted in particular histories" (1992, p. 402). In fact it seems that pedagogy, intentions and circumstances all work together to distinguish Aboriginal and minority teachers.

What is also clear is that these teachers have different conceptions and motivations as professionals Minority teachers and Aboriginal teachers often describe their work in education as being politically motivated. For example, a fifty-year-old male teacher originally from Guyana describes himself as "'a radical teacher' because he included 'political consciousness' as part of his goal as teacher, and political awareness of how inequality is perpetuated" (Bascia, 1996b, p. 83). For black women teachers in Casey's (1993) work, being a black teacher means "'raising the race'; accepting personal responsibility for the well-being of one's people, and, especially, for the education of all black children" (Casey, 1993, p. 152). Similarly, a male teacher featured in Lipman's research described " his work as a continuation of his calling to help raise African American and poor youth" (Lipman, 1996, p. 47). Many minority teachers view their role beyond their individual success, including "survival of the person, the family, the community, and the people. They want to educate children to think critically and to prepare them to play an active role in their communities and the broader society" (King, 1994 in Lipman, 1996, p. 52). Similarly, Bascia found minority immigrant teachers regarded teaching "as a highly respected occupation, as tied to anti-colonial struggle, as community development work" (Bascia 1996a, p. 8.). Aboriginal teachers also have an "image of themselves as participants in the political process of recovering Aboriginal languages and culture, and gaining control of Aboriginal education. Their political orientation seems to be generally rooted in the self-determination movement" (Friesen and Orr, 1995, p. 21).

Minority teachers commonly describe their work as being holistic, acknowledging the interdependence and larger context in which they do their work. An immigrant teacher described his work as an attempt "to integrate spiritual leadership, community work, and political perspective and teaching-related activities outside as well as inside the classroom" (Bascia, 1996b, p. 87). Lipman (1996) argues that these teachers "demonstrated a holistic concern for the young people in their charge and adopted parenting or mentoring roles with them" (p. 51). They are "passionate" in their teaching and attend to "emotional as well as academic" needs of their students (Hulsebosch and Koerner, 1994, p. 12).

Aboriginal and minority teachers describe their work as a form of advocacy. For example, Edgar, a black teacher, regards his work outside the classroom and in a professional development capacity as "an extended form of advocacy for children" (Bascia, 1996b, p. 88). Often immigrant teachers describe themselves as being advocates for their students as they draw on their own "values and experiences- - their own conceptions of what it means to be a teacher, and their own experiences as learners and immigrants, that they 'brought with them,' so to speak, into their schools" (Bascia, 1996c, p. 163).

The family serves as a source of inspiration and understanding in the work of Aboriginal and minority teachers. Friesen and Orr (1995) found that kinship terms are often used in how Aboriginal students and teachers address each other. Henry (1992) discusses the practice of five African Canadian woman teachers' pedagogy, describing their work as efforts to "sustain and recreate communities of caring and resistance, [that] these teachers' experiences and consciousness shape their pedagogy for the social betterment of Black children and sustenance of Black cultural survival, they have politicized their pedagogy, taking charge of children outside the classroom and school, they act as othermothers, [in their effort] to

uplift the race in a context of racial oppression" (p. 402). Clearly, minority teachers' visions of education includes more than teaching the basics, although that is an important part of their work as well.

Casey (1993) also reports that the "teacher-as-mother is a central controlling metaphor of the black women teachers' narratives" (p. 109). She suggests that these black teachers draw on their heritage found in the female slave narratives where "the theme of family and family unity is transformed and expanded into an ideal of service to others" (Braxton in Casey, 1993, p. 131). In Bascia's (1996b) work, Edgar refers to his classroom as "our home, ... projecting the sense of family that he created within this space, ... he engendered a climate of mutual trust and respect (p. 47). The idea of family as an organizing principle in one's teaching is evident in both male and female minority teachers.

Hulsebosh and Koerner (1994) include minority and non-minority teachers as teachers who are capable of being "culturally relevant teachers who regard diversity as a strength in both themselves and their students" (p.10). Such teachers value differences in non-judgmental ways and struggle to be inclusive, emphasizing that the teacher must be politically conscious of how inequality is perpetuated (Hulseboch & Koerner, 1994, p.10). They suggest that culturally relevant teachers must be "gate-openers" and must teach students how to gain access into dominant society (Hulseboch & Koerner, 1994, p.10). A teacher who is politically conscious is "aware of how a group's subordinate social status in the greater society may or may not get played out in the classroom setting" (Bartolome, 1993 in Hulsebosch and Koerner, 1994, p.13).

Drawing on their own experience of oppression and discrimination as a source of inspiration and credibility in working with students, Aboriginal and minority teachers see themselves as specially positioned. Their awareness of the part that oppression has played in limiting them has been important in shaping their role in "helping students to make themselves be heard" (Hulsebosch and Koerner, 1994, p. 14). Black women teachers' narratives acknowledge their "systematic subjugation" while at the same time they promote the attainment of an education as an "honourable means of resisting oppression" (Casey, 1993, p. 113). These teachers acknowledge a form of racial knowledge, which one can seek to undo, refute, or free oneself from, when one understands white knowledge (Casey, 1993).

The Contributions Aboriginal and Minority Teachers Make

Despite all the challenges that lie before Aboriginal and minority teachers, they are accomplishing and fulfilling to various degrees the many expectations placed upon them. Earlier research, conducted primarily in Alaska (Collier, 1979; Barnhardt, 1982; Erickson & Mohatt, 1982; Van Ness, 1981) concluded that Aboriginal teachers and Aboriginal students share common and congruent communication patterns, as well as sharing a special connectedness which they suggest enhances their success. This is substantiated by more recent research in Saskatchewan, (Baillie, 1994; Carnegie, 1991; Friesen & Orr, 1995; and McNinch, 1994; Leavitt, 1995; Stair, 1991). For example, Carnegie (1991) found that northern school boards felt that NORTEP graduates in the schools contributed to less cultural conflict between students and teachers. Saskatchewan school administrators have noted that Aboriginal teachers, in addition to their "cultural awareness, ... bring an understanding of student concerns that teachers from other training backgrounds do not have" (Baillie, 1994, p. 41). McNinch (1994) also notes that two benefits clearly accrued from the presence of Aboriginal teachers in Saskatchewan schools: these teachers provided "significant role modeling for students and an opportunity for increasing knowledge of Aboriginal culture within the schools" (p. 26). Friesen and Orr (1995) found Aboriginal teachers were role model of Aboriginality, and Stairs (1991) found that First Nations teachers bring not only a fund of knowledge, but also culturally patterned ways of organizing and passing on that knowledge. Bouvier (1991) also suggests that Aboriginal teachers do breakdown stereotypes for all students.

Culture and Identity

Culture and identity are concepts that permeate this work. Aboriginal teachers are valued and recognized for the role they play in providing culturally relevant education. Furthermore, they perceive their responsibility as teachers as being integrally tied to their Aboriginality. As previously discussed, they do interpret and express culture with their students, as well as providing some access to specialized knowledge, including providing access to elders and communities who had previously maintained some distance from schools (Friesen & Orr, 1995). The challenge that teachers face, however, is to balance delicately their responsibility as teachers against their knowledge of what is culturally appropriate (Lipka, 1991). This challenge is evident in the work of NORTEP teachers who are uncertain about what teaching "culture" means to parents and the community, and what that means to themselves in terms of their responsibility to others. For example, one NORTEP teachers states, "The parents say lets teach culture in a classroom but they don't come out and say what they mean by culture" (Friesen & Orr, 1995, p.22).

So although there is agreement that Aboriginal teachers need to provide a culturally relevant education for Aboriginal students, NORTEP teachers ask, "What is it exactly that you want to be taught in the classroom?" (Friesen and Orr, 1995, p. 22). This uncertainty is derived from the strong assimilative forces of Eurocentric education that the teachers experienced as students. How were they to master skills and knowledge derived from Aboriginal languages and cultures when they were not exposed to them or found that they were devalued by their Eurocentric education? Carnegie (1991) refers to NORTEP students in particular, but it is a concern for others, that they [have] "not necessarily attained understanding or mastery of skills to incorporate culturally relevant activities" (p. 129). Bouvier (1991) comments that "Aboriginal teachers' ability to integrate traditions and perspectives from their own community will vary with the range of experiences and abilities each brings" (p. 12).

Many Aboriginal teachers refer to the great impact that the Aboriginal teacher education programs have had on the development of their pride, skills and knowledge. Such programs are commonly regarded as engaged in a "process of creating a cultural identity" (Baillie, 1994, p. 22), as well as providing a foundation for teaching. Although literature is available that discusses Aboriginal and Indigenous philosophy, Carnegie found that "philosophy is helpful, but must be augmented with tools by which to achieve cultural relevance" (1991, p. 129). Although not all Aboriginal teachers make the education of Aboriginal students their primary motivate, nonetheless, there are those who "want to teach Aboriginal content, those who want to be role models, and those who want to teach in an Aboriginal way and impart an Aboriginal worldview. School boards, in clarifying their expectations for Aboriginal teachers will have to take the individuality and differences among these teachers into account as well" (McNinch, 1994, p. 76). Diversity among Aboriginal teachers must be acknowledged, as Casey (1993) also suggests is important in reviewing Black teachers work.

Quality and Nature of Relationships

There is a common theme running through the research on Aboriginal and minority teachers that speaks to a need to consider their work in the larger socio-political context. This is important because it highlights the immensity of what is required of such teachers, but also draws attention to the need to consider teacher's work within a larger context and the extent to which that larger context impacts the degree to which they can fulfill their goals and visions. For example, racism, poverty and power, attitudes about employment equity, and limited perceptions of the goals of multiculturalism need to be acknowledged as factors that limit the contributions they make as teachers.

Larger conditions outside school

Bouvier (1991) has suggested that the potential contributions made by Aboriginal teachers must be

understood within the larger context of Aboriginal communities and those communities within the larger socio-political Canadian climate. She acknowledges that their contributions cannot and should not be the only force for change (Bouvier, 1991). A similar sentiment is expressed as a result of research with Canadian racial immigrant minority teachers; Thiessen (1996) claims, "Much of their capacity to make a difference depends on their will and capacity to confront the conditions which influence their roles as agents of reform" (p. 147). Clearly, the changes that are required cannot be left to the actions of minority teachers alone; the whole system must take responsibility, as many of the changes do not only address Aboriginal and minority teachers' issues. For example, one black immigrant male teacher, felt that his work is made more difficult because in general teachers' work is devalued, and it is devalued because their work is with children (Bascia, 1996b p. 85), the least powerful in the educational system. The important point he is making is that regardless of one's cultural identity, the role of teacher will be devalued within the larger society. But minority teachers experience even more devaluation because "The low status of the students that teachers work with corresponds with their own poor treatment, because their students are regarded as less desirable, so are the teachers of such students treated poorly"(Bascia, 1996c, p. 165).

Racism and multiculturalism

The pervasiveness of racism is a common problem for minority and Aboriginal teachers, whether in Canada, United States, New Zealand or England (Bangar & McDermott, 1989; Delpit, 1995; McNinch, 1994; Mitchell & Mitchell, 1993). Bangar & McDermott (1989) "found that it was not possible to operate in the classroom in isolation from the racist climate outside" (p. 142). Furthermore, they suggest that placing "isolated black teachers into racist environments is not necessarily going to challenge racism. The desire to create 'positive' role-models for black pupils through employing a few more black teachers (but not too many) is fraught with dangers through the unrealistic expectation that a few individuals can change the racist environment in which we work and live" (Bangar & McDermott 1989 p. 147). This position is reiterated by Maori teachers (Mitchell & Mitchell, 1993) and by African American and Alaska Native teachers (Delpit, 1995).

Employment Equity

Employment and education equity is fraught with difficulties, but not because it is not necessary, but because of the resentment and hostility it engenders when not understood or fully supported throughout the system and in society in general. McNinch reports that education equity is perceived by teachers as something of a double edged sword. As one Aboriginal teacher suggested, "although it is necessary, it is both a blessing and curse" (1994, p.22). Lam, C. (1996) argues that the school's expectations that minority teachers be both role models and objects of employment equity call attention to them and "inflame attitudes rather than change them," leading her to question these approaches to social and educational change (p. 46).

Part of the impact of education equity is to place Aboriginal teachers in a position where they are regularly subjected to a perception that they were hired simply because they were Aboriginal rather than for their competence and skills (McNinch, 1994). Bangar and McDermott (1989) and Mitchell & Mitchell, (1993) report similar experiences. Finding a place in schools and feeling accepted is beset with many challenges. For example, minority and Aboriginal teachers are left to wonder if they were hired or not hired because of racial criteria (Casey, 1993; McNinch, 1994). Part of the unfortunate consequence is that minority teachers devalue their own strengths and abilities, as Casey (1993) found: "Considering how irrelevant their particular qualifications seem to be to the outcome of their employment searches, it is not surprising, therefore, to hear each of these teachers attribute her final success to luck" (p. 136). Furthermore, Bangar and McDermott (1989) argue that affirmative action did not address the problems of black education, but occurred to "give credibility to the schools involved and led to black teachers' marginalization as second-class educa-

tors which further fueled racism" (p. 137). Thus, although affirmation action may improve the image of schools, it has also added stress to those who are direct recipients of such initiatives, even though as teachers they realize it is necessary to have such programs.

Special relationship to students

This research on minority teachers inevitably provides glimpses of their views on how they relate to their students. While minority teachers' relationships with their students is holistically and ultimately tied to their goals, visions, and purpose in the teaching profession, it is separated here to draw attention specially to common themes embedded in this relationship. These common themes include: the personal nature of the relationships that teachers establish with their students, the use of kinship terms and kinship type of relationships that are fostered with minority students, the high standards that such teachers hold their students to, the use of teacher's personal experience as a source for teaching, values that minority teachers strive to instill in their students, and positive attitudes that such teachers hold towards their students.

These teachers work to develop classroom atmospheres characterized by respect, sensitivity and responsibility. For example, Stallworth (1994) found that minority teachers developed classroom climates that "stressed responsibility, self-control, and respect" (p. 11). They also demonstrate caring and concern for their students by demanding high standards and providing them with appropriate support (Delpit, 1995; Foster, 1995; Lipman, 1996). These teachers "demonstrated confidence in students, acknowledged their strengths, and engaged them in intellectually challenging and personally and socially meaningful learning" (Lipman, 1996 p. 50), trusting them to rise to the challenges of doing well (Bascia, 1996b). Minority teachers are not afraid to show affection for their students (Henry, 1992). One minority teacher describes a good teacher as "someone who really cares about the kids, who gives of himself or herself" (Lam, C., 1996, p. 40). Minority teachers engender connectedness and the development of trusting relationships (Foster, 1995; Lipman, 1996; Stallworth, 1994) which are also central aspects of Aboriginal and Indigenous education (Cajete, 1995; Hampton, 1995).

As previously mentioned in the section on goals and visions for education, minority and Aboriginal teachers draw on their own experiences as sources of knowledge in teaching their students, particularly in dealing with racism (Bascia, 1996c; Lam, C., 1996; Thiessen, 1989). For example, immigrant minority teachers perceived themselves as advocates for students, with an added responsibility to teach students "'survival skills', ... that is how the system works and what is required to succeed" (Lam, C., 1996, p. 34-35).

Aboriginal and minority teachers also reveal their own perceptions of their non-Aboriginal and non-minority colleagues. Many of the Aboriginal and minority teachers feel that stereotypes of minority and Aboriginal people held by their white colleagues do shape and characterize how these teachers related to them as well as the type of requests made of them. For example, one teacher explained that she was frustrated when her difference "turned her into a show-and-tell" (Lam, C., 1996, p. 23). Another very common aspect of their experience, which in part, reflects the degree to which they remain apart from other teachers is the feeling of isolation and invisibility at the same time as they are marked as different (Bascia, 1996c, Mitchell & Mitchell, 1993, Delpit, 1995). Isolated and marked as different, one teacher explained that she felt that she was "free game for discriminatory remarks" (Lam, C., 1996, p. 25). Another reported the experience of being left alone to defend controversial Aboriginal issues, such as land claims, in staffroom discourse (Malin, 1994). Yet, another teacher spoke about her disappointment when her white colleagues did not provide her with necessary support she needed to confront a white parent, although they "assured her that they were 'pulling for her,'" they did not attend the parent-teacher conference (Lipman, 1996, p. 54).

Lipman (1996) also documents the insidious ways in which African American teachers' pedagogical knowledge and practice are discounted in the restructuring process. She concludes, "given the existing

relations of power and the weight of prevailing ideologies (especially racist bias, Eurocentrism, and deficit models) on their own, exemplary teachers of students of color may have little influence on the outcomes of collaboration" (p. 59). Not only are minority teachers excluded and overlooked in the educational change process, but they are also regarded with hostility because of the enormous commitment they demonstrate in their work. For example, one teacher commented on how the difficulty of her work was compounded: "The harder you work, the less you are appreciated, by some people. I don't tell people I am a teacher. Maybe society has something to do with it. And too much politics. I don't dislike the kids, even the worse ones, I dislike the system" (Casey, 1993, p. 148). She knows that teachers are devalued, as was previously discussed in the literature, although she does not begrudge the students, but realizes that the system needs to change.

There is common agreement that many minority teachers perceive non-minority teachers as not having very high expectations of minority students; in fact their expectations are thought to be very low. Monsivais (1990) found that Latino teachers perceived non-Latino teachers to have lower expectations of Latino students than of white students. One teacher believed that "alienation and poor academic performance of many black students at Gates was due to teachers' low expectations and inability to recognize their strengths" (Lipman, 1996 p. 46). White teachers are often described as holding a "deficit model" of students (Lipman, 1996; Mitchell & Mitchell, 1993) which contributes to the realization of a self-fulfilling prophecy where students and their communities experience the greatest loss.

The underestimation of minority and Aboriginal students is further demonstrated in the devaluation of teachers from this group and their capacity to take on administrative leadership. Bascia (1996c) and Mitchell & Mitchell (1993) both point out that minority and Aboriginal teachers have been discouraged and not supported in their efforts to assume larger administrative positions. Often the constraints experienced by these teachers include: "administrators [who] place greater value on stability and predictability, and don't demonstrate understanding or support of [their] work with other teachers and display instead a discomfort and disbelief in [their] own expertise" (Bascia, 1996b p. 91). On the other hand, Lipman (1996) also found that those who are persistently adamant in voicing their concerns for minority students were "silenced—kept from leadership positions, ostracized, unsupported in their initiatives, deemed too opinionated, and kept in check by an undercurrent of maintaining the status quo in race relations" (p. 56). On the other hand, those who do not take a strong stance are thought to be too passive or unpredictable.

Furthermore, Lipman (1996) found that schools would not openly acknowledge the pedagogical knowledge and leadership of successful teachers of African American students; for example, "one teacher's rapport with difficult or disruptive students was attributed to her African Americanness rather than her specific pedagogy" (p. 56). This stance on the part of the administration and other colleagues has the effect of diminishing the expertise of minority teachers as well as suggesting that it is pedagogical knowledge that cannot possibly be learned and assumed by their white colleagues. Lipman (1996) found the work of an African American woman teacher disregarded by administration and others as "innate and intangible, the result of unique talent, and therefore not replicable" (p. 56). This teacher's knowledge, accumulated from 30 years of teaching was "discounted as being 'special' and therefore not valid as a source of knowledge" (Lipman, 1996, p. 56). As minority teachers are devalued, so also are their opinions. In Malin's study (1994) the opinions of non-Aboriginal staff were perceived to have been given precedence over Aboriginal opinions, even when dealing with Aboriginal issues.

It was also common to have non-minority and non-Aboriginal parents and students challenge them, an experience that suggests to teachers a distrust derived from their cultural or racial background. It was noted further that among minority parents, cultural background did engender their trust as well, a perception that contributed to white students fearing favouritism among minority students by minority teachers (Bangar & McDermott, 1989; Lam, M. 1996).

As a result of these teachers perceptions and treat-

ments, minority and Aboriginal teachers respond in various ways, for example, by not willing to challenge other staff, avoiding conflict, and maintaining a noninterventionist stance (Thiessen, Bascia, & Goodson, 1996). For example, as a result of racist treatment, one teacher avoided unnecessary contact with other staff. This, in turn, led to her further marginalization (Lam, C., 1996, p. 27). These teachers often maintain an "on guard stance" Thiessen (1989), and are often afraid to ask for help (Stallworth, 1994). But it is not only minority teachers who may prefer not to intervene, other research suggests that a "noninterventionist policy may be typical of professional norms within the larger North American teacher population" (Bascia, 1996c, p. 170). Malin (1994) and Mitchell and Mitchell (1993) reveal that many Aboriginal or Maori teachers leave the classroom in response to their stress and perceived lack of support. In their recognition of the challenge in addressing conflict, "Saskatchewan school administrators suggest a reconsideration of the STF code of ethics and the role of the teacher as professional, for example in regards to cultural differences in dealing with conflict" (Baillie, 1994, p. 43).

Recommendations

Much of the literature contains recommendations for change. If not offering recommendations explicitly, they suggest recommendations implicitly through their documentation of the many difficulties experienced by Aboriginal and minority teachers. Basic to all is the need for change to occur on many levels. Bouvier (1990, 1991) urges recognition that issues particular to the Aboriginal community need to be addressed and those issues in turn need to be addressed within the context of the larger Canadian society. "Aboriginal teachers alone cannot be expected to make necessary changes, the broader context of the larger society and Aboriginal community must also assume responsibility" (Bouvier, 1991, p. 12). McNinch (1994) also addresses the need to recognize Aboriginal teacher hiring and retention as "issues that cannot be dealt with in isolation from larger personnel, administrative and human rights issues" (McNinch, 1994, p. 42), a sentiment also voiced by Maori teachers (Mitchell & Mitchell, 1993). The point is that this issue of change is not confined to the local or national but to the world and international levels.

The issue of race is the cornerstone of both opportunities and negative treatment of minority teachers. As such, the issue of racism needs to be dealt with from within the relationships of power and dominance in society. Certainly a problem faced by all, racism, as voiced by some black educators in England, must be challenged within the state in which it functions. They conclude, "It would be absurd to imagine an anti-racist education system existing within a racist state" (Bangar & McDermott, 1989, p. 152). Any anti-racist initiative must itself be an attack on the ideas used to justify racism. We do this, argue Bangar & McDermott (1989), through "challenging those ideas which perpetuate the myth that black people are a problem" (p. 153). They go on to suggest that "many anti-racist measures and policies fail because those implementing them do not recognize the wider context within which racism operates and are unable to extend their solidarity and support of black people beyond the few token gestures of their own project" (Bangar & McDermott, 1989, p. 149). Clearly, racism can no longer be regarded as simply the uninformed attitudes of a few individuals; the systemic support within which racism is produced must come under closer scrutiny.

In summary, we have explored through the literature, the many expectations placed on Aboriginal and minority teachers, including the assumptions: that their racial or cultural identity alone will make them effective teachers, that they will be able to solve all the problems confronting disempowered youth and their communities, that they alone can eradicate racism or have special knowledge about how to challenge it, that they will place the interests of western institutions above the interests of their communities. Included in this literature review is a discussion of the following goals and aspirations of minority and Aboriginal teachers: acknowledgment of the political nature of their work as they strive to teach their students to resist by succeeding in schools, to be cultural role models who can help to bridge the gap between the school and community, to be advocates of students and to regard students in a holistic manner that considers their emotional, spiritual and physical as well as academic needs. They are teachers

who draw on their own experience of oppression and their families as sources of knowledge and inspiration in their teaching. The quality and nature of relationships occupy a large part of this literature. For example, it clear that minority and Aboriginal teachers are calling for their work to be considered within the larger socio-political context. Racism, poverty, attitudes about employment equity all limit the contributions that teachers can make. Nonetheless, minority and Aboriginal students find that they are able to elicit high standards from their students by establishing mutual relationships based on respect and trust. This ability, they argue, is rarely found in their white colleagues whom they admonish for having very low expectations of minority students. Aboriginal and minority teachers report a lack of support, characterized by intense isolation and invisibility. These teachers are often unwilling and unable to adequately challenge other staff and hence often maintain an avoidance stance. Despite all the challenges to them, minority and Aboriginal teachers manage to realize to some degree the goals and aspirations they have as teachers, which is recognized by school administrations. But more generally, people need to acknowledge the role that power and domination play in the lives of minority and Aboriginal teachers, pervasiveness of racism in schools and society in general being one symptom of that powerlessness and sign of that domination that continues to limit minority and Aboriginal communities in general.

III. Research Study Methodology

Project Methodology

This qualitative study focuses on the experiences of Aboriginal teachers within the provincial school system. Several phases of study comprised this research: 1) a literature review of the experiences of "minority" teachers, including a review of Aboriginal education policy in Saskatchewan; 2) a survey of 106 Saskatchewan Aboriginal teachers in publicly funded schools; 3) dialogical interviews with twenty selected teachers; and 4) two talking circles held to confirm and clarify the preliminary findings and issues. Finally, this report offers conclusions and recommendations including those offered by Aboriginal teachers

Objectives of the Research

The main objectives of the study were as follows:

1. to identify significant experiences and relationships among Aboriginal teachers within the publicly funded schools system;
2. to explore how Aboriginal culture, identity, knowledge, and ways of knowing influence their perceptions, attitudes, and choices in teaching and how these experiences affect their relationships, performance and responsibilities within the school;
3. to identify the factors or issues that are supporting or limiting their professional development and performance;
4. to identify Aboriginal teachers' perceptions of these relationships and experiences in the provincial school systems, the role models they draw on in their professional lives, the significance of their being Aboriginal teachers, their perceptions of their own roles and of the expectations placed on them by their colleagues and administrators and communities, and the way these responsibilities and visions are actualized in the responsibilities they assume within the school; and
5. to develop recommendations to improve practice, inform decision-making and policy development, improve programs, and enhance teacher education.

Research Questions

The researchers identified the following research questions to frame the study:

1. **Aboriginal Teacher Background and Histories**
   A. What is the educational, professional and cultural profile of Aboriginal teachers who are currently teaching in Saskatchewan schools?

2. **Goals and Visions and Purposes of Education**
   A. What are the perceived educational goals, purposes and visions of Aboriginal teachers in the provincial schools?
   B. How are these perceived goals and purposes and visions actualized in their professional roles as teachers?
   C. What limits their ability to actualize their goals and purposes and visions?

3. **Relationships and Expectations of Performance**
   A. What role models do Aboriginal teachers draw upon in framing their professional lives and their perceptions of their roles and responsibilities within the schools that affect

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students?

B. What do Aboriginal teachers perceive are the expectations of administration, colleagues, and parents toward them as teachers?

C. What do they perceive as the quality of relationships that are important or limiting to their professional growth and development as teachers?

D. What do Aboriginal teacher perceive limits or promotes their effective performance as teachers?

4. **Culture and Identity**

A. What significance do Aboriginal teachers place on their culture and identity as Aboriginal teachers in their teaching, relationships, philosophy and visions?

B. How is their sense of Aboriginality reflected in their work as teachers, viewed by their peers, and affected by schooling in provincial schools?

5. **Successes, Recommendations, Educational implications**

A. What successes and contributions do Aboriginal teachers perceive they have made or bring to First Nations and Metis education in the provincial schools?

B. What recommendations do Aboriginal teachers have to improve the educational context (environment, climate, relationships, content) in which they work or in the educational context for Aboriginal children?

C. What are the implications for teacher education and professional development?

Ethics and Confidentiality

The research team is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of the teachers of this study. We have used numerical codes for encoding the interviews in the data and have kept the audio tapes and the interviews and notes on the interviews secure. We have also removed names of persons, schools and locations in an effort not to compromise the identity of any participants.

Phase One: Aboriginal Teacher Profile Survey

The researchers developed the Aboriginal Teacher Profile Survey from the following question:

> *What are the educational, social and cultural profiles of Aboriginal teachers currently teaching in Saskatchewan public and separate schools?*

Developing the Survey Instrument

In seeking to identify the profiles of Aboriginal teachers teaching in the Saskatchewan publicly funded schools and to identify a pool of teachers to interview, the researchers developed a questionnaire. This instrument was intended to secure the desired information, assure confidentiality of the participants, yet be inviting, unobtrusive and brief. The design of the instrument recognized teachers' administrative workloads and ensured ease of response and a minimum amount of time to complete. The researchers kept in mind the need to respect the different Aboriginal cultures and therefore did not appropriate any traditional cultural designs or motifs for the questionnaire.

Identifying the desired information gathered through the survey was determined by deciding what characteristics a representative group of Aboriginal teachers may have. Information was sought in seven areas that included personal information, family status, First Nations language skills, previous schooling, teacher education, formal language training, and employment history.

The survey questions went through several draft stages and reviews among several university professors and students to try to achieve brevity, respect, clarity, and economy. One university professor used it as a learning tool in one of her research methodology

classes and provided many valuable suggestions. The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation provided an in-house artist to design the survey with suggestions from the researchers. The completed survey (Appendix A) took approximately 10 minutes to complete, and at least one teacher thanked us for making it so quick and easy to complete.

Inviting Teacher Participation

After undertaking the appropriate approval of protocols, including vetting the questionnaire through the Committee on University Ethics on Human Experimentation (Appendix B) and the Directors of Education (Appendix C) within the province, the researchers began the surveying process by determining where the teachers were located. The researchers requested special permission from the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation to make information available to us of the number of self-declared Aboriginal teachers in Saskatchewan in 1996-97 and the districts where they were located. Based on these records, we found 315 full time self-declared Aboriginal teachers in Saskatchewan publicly funded schools in 1996-97 within 50 school divisions (See figures A and B). We sought permission from Directors of Education from these school divisions to include their teachers in the study.

Table A
FULL TIME TEACHERS
ABORIGINAL DESCENT* 1996-97

	Female	Male	Total
Status/Treaty Indian	75	17	92
Metis	143	69	212
Non-Status Indian	4	6	10
Inuit	0	1	1
Total	222	93	315

(out of 10,134 full time teachers)
*Self Identified (voluntary information)
DATA SOURCE: Saskatchewan Education Teacher File

Table B
PART TIME TEACHERS
ABORIGINAL DESCENT* 1996-97

	Female	Male	Total
Status/Treaty Indian	10	2	12
Metis	9	2	11
Non-Status Indian	1	0	1
Inuit	1	0	1
Total	21	4	25

(out of 1686 part time teachers)
*Self Identified (voluntary information)
DATA SOURCE: Saskatchewan Education Teacher File

After securing permission from the directors of education to survey their Aboriginal teachers, we sent each teacher a letter requesting her/his participation in our study, together with the survey, information about the researchers and the study, and a self addressed envelope. Two mailings of the survey were sent. The first one went initially to all the school divisions that had provided permission. The second mailing went to teachers in the North where we had a low response rate which we attributed to teachers' receiving the questionnaires in the latter part of the school year, an unusually busy period for teachers.

Not all Directors of Education responded affirmatively to our request for permission to survey their teachers. From the 50 school divisions where we initiated correspondence, thirty-four school divisions provided their support and/or permission to their teachers. Among the school divisions where we did not receive a response, it could be assumed that the directors were not aware of any Aboriginal teachers in their division, although there were self-declared Aboriginal teachers in all the divisions contacted.

Halfway through the study, we had received only 27% returns on the survey. With more time left in the

study, we sent a second mailing of the survey to the northern schools where our surveys had been forwarded late in the school year. We anticipated that the busy time of year may have contributed to the low returns. In our next mailing, we apologized for the earlier survey arriving late in the school year when they were most busy and encouraged them to fill out and return the survey that we had enclosed. We also put an ad in the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation Bulletin which is mailed to all schools. In our ad, we thanked Aboriginal teachers for their returned surveys but asked those who had not yet returned their survey to do so. Appendix C and D provide the requests to the directors and teachers with accompanying information about the study (Appendix E). These letters and their enclosures provided information about the study, its purposes, the survey and information about the confidentiality of their information.

Of the 331 surveys sent out to 315 individual full-time Aboriginal teachers through their school division, 106 (34%) Aboriginal teachers responded to the survey with an astounding 86 (81%) willing to be interviewed for the study and 78 (73%) willing to participate in the study's talking circles. These numbers far exceeded our representative sample or target from which we expected to draw from for the next interview and talking circle phases of the study.

It should be further pointed out that the return rate of other First Nations university graduate survey follow-ups have been comparable to the return rate of this study. In a study of Aboriginal teacher graduates from University of British Columbia, the study return rate was 31%. In another study researchers in Wisconsin mailed a questionnaire to 214 First Nations university graduates in which 27.8% of these graduates returned their questionnaire (Archibald, Bowman, Pepper & Urion, 1995; Wilson, 1983).

Analysing the data

The information gleaned from the survey was processed on a computer using Filemaker Pro Program. This program provides easy access to each item of the survey in discrete units, as well as quick number and percentage tabulations of each line item from the survey. A technical assistant encoded the data as each survey arrived, providing a number code for each entry. We also were offered the services of a technical consultant Rodger Graham from within the College of Education to provide analyses of the survey. Cross tabulations of items have been sought to test associations with items that would indicate new values, for example, how many teachers whose first language is other than English were raised in an Aboriginal community or how many teachers completing in ITEP or SUNTEP were in the public school system. Appendices F and G provide a summary of the data from the survey in two formats: the questions and the summary of frequencies, as tables of data recording frequencies and proportions in percentages.

Inviting Participation and Interviewing Teachers

As stated earlier, of the 106 Aboriginal teachers who participated in the survey, 86 identified themselves as possible candidates for the interviewing phase. Of these 86, the three principal investigators of the study interviewed 20 selected teachers.

Selection of the Sample

One of the purposes of conducting the survey was to ensure a pool from which we could choose a representative sample of Aboriginal teachers in publicly funded schools to interview. To ensure our sample was representative, we considered the following variables: sex; years of experience; age; location of teaching, i.e., inner city and community, suburban, rural, and northern schools; level of teaching, i.e., elementary, middle and high school; and Aboriginal identification as First Nations or Metis. A summary of the characteristics of the interviewed sample is provided below.

- 3 males and 17 females.
- 7 Cree, 1 Saulteaux, 15 Metis (combinations of Cree and Metis)

- 1 Raised On-reserve, 7 In Metis communities, 5 Off-reserve/non-Metis communities, and 8 urban
- 5 Living now in Metis communities, 4 in Off-reserve/non-Metis , 11 urban.
- 2 in ages 20-29; 9 in 30-39, 7 in 40-49, 2 in 50-59
- 2 single w/dependants, 3 single w/o dependants, 11 with partner w/dependants, 4 with partner w/o dependants
- 12 spoke an Aboriginal language
- 16 had attended provincial schools
- 2 had a post-graduate degree
- 4 ITEP, 4 NORTEP, and 7 SUNTEP graduates
- 9 Direct Entry; 11 Mature Entry
- All with Professional A Certificates
- 5 with Cree language training
- 6 with ESL training
- The majority of primary middle years teachers, 4 high school teachers
- 3 currently teaching in Catholic separate, 16 in Public, 1 in Band schools
- 8 had taught Native Studies

Interview Process

In this phase, selected participants were interviewed using a dialogical process similar to the one used by Hampton (1995). As stated in Friesen and Orr (1995), Voices of Northern Teachers, storytelling is a natural and traditional form of Aboriginal communication: "conversation with Aboriginal teachers is a useful way to gain insight into the stories about their lives and how their lives impact upon their teaching because it is based upon a two-way flow of ideas and does not place the researcher in a position of privilege" (p. 3-4). Our intent was to invite a reflective discussion of Aboriginal teachers' experiences to make implicit knowledge explicit (Hampton, 1995). The use of experience as a legitimate basis of making meaning is well documented and supported (Clandinin and Connelly, 1990; Carter, 1993; Goodson, 1988; Eisner, 1985). The researchers were cognizant of the challenge presented by such methodology. To transform lived experience into knowledge, such a process must be more than an exchange or the telling of experience (Friere and Macedo, 1995). The reflection must include a process of yielding to collective action.

Each of the researchers conducted many of the interviews on a one-to-one basis, while three interviews were each done jointly with two of the researchers. The interviews began with protocols involving assuring confidentiality and signing letters of consent (Appendix H). The interviews lasted approximately one to two hours, and were conducted in a variety of informal settings, such as in the interviewees' or interviewers' homes, in a private room in the school, local cafes, University of Saskatchewan Faculty Club, or in the researcher's office. An interview protocol and questionnaire was used to guide the interview, although interviews were not rigidly determined by our questions. We were conscious of certain general themes and issues that needed to be covered and in the early stages were able to make a diagram of themes to help us to remember the direction of the questions. In general, the atmosphere of the interviews could be characterized as a conversation between colleagues, informal yet directed.

Eighteen of the twenty interviews were tape recorded; two were not taped due to malfunction of the tape recorder. The eighteen interviews were transcribed verbatim, including meta-linguistic data, such as laughter, exclamations and other meta-comments. For the two interviews that were not taped, the interviewer reconstructed the content of the interview in as detailed a manner as possible, using notes made during the interview, and extensive notes made immediately after the interview.

Data Analysis

Each interviewer then performed a preliminary content analysis of the interviews she had conducted and provided each other with our preliminary content analyses. Considering our collective reading of each others' content analysis, we collaboratively developed a set of categories for the content analysis of all the interviews. These included the following categories: socialization and identity formation; reflections on teacher education and becoming a teacher; self perceptions, roles and expectations of teachers'

experiences and reflections; relationships of and supports to the teachers; perceptions of educational system, schools and curriculum content; and recommendations. From this collaborative content analysis, we developed a set of themes and issues that described the content and meaning of our interviews.

Listening and Sharing the Findings in Talking Circles

Recognizing some of the subjectivity to the process of interpreting data, and the importance of reflecting what we had heard back to the participants, we invited selected teachers to two talking circles. One was held in Saskatoon and the other in Regina. The purpose of the talking circles was to review the significant findings of the study and to determine whether we had derived accurately from the interviews the essential significance of their stories and experiences. They refined our understanding of the professional lives of Aboriginal teachers and elders and to validated our initial findings. We invited teachers to read the findings before the session and suggested they consider adding their further issues and understandings and bring recommendations for action to Saskatchewan Education and any other stakeholders of the study.

Talking circles created the space for another dialogical process, this time at a collective level, to deepen collective understanding of the issues and to support a synergistic and cooperative construct for knowledge production. As Aboriginal researchers we put forward the value of the talking circle as a process that values Aboriginal ways of communicating and sharing. The talking circle brings together the unique experiences and perspectives of each person to the center, and to the collective. The circle enables each person to bring her/his truths and understanding of the issues before the group.

Our first step was to contact all twenty of the teachers who had been interviewed, asking them if they wished to participate in the proposed talking circles. Another 15 teachers from our initial sample of 86 teachers, who had not been interviewed, were also contacted and invited to participate in the circles. In the end, 13 teachers participated in the Saskatoon circle, including 10 teachers who had been interviewed; seven teachers participated in the Regina circle, including 3 who had been interviewed. All three principal investigators attended each circle.

To secure teachers during the regular work week to attend the talking circle, we requested support from Directors of Education to provide teachers with a leave day (with a substitute teacher) to attend the talking circles. In addition, we consulted the Regional Directors of Education regarding this phase of the study. In having them ask through internal protocols to attend the talking circles, the teachers had been apprised that this gesture of protocol could compromise their identity at this stage of the study. They could either accept our invitation and request the leave day or not, depending on whether they cared to indicate to their supervisors their identity and participation.

We sent to each of the invited teachers directions and a map of the location of the talking circles, information about the study and the draft findings, and information about the talking circle process (Appendix I). Both talking circles were audio taped and later transcribed, along with the notes taken from the sessions.

The circles were run according to protocol as understood by the researchers and were guided by Aboriginal elders who had experience working within educational settings, particularly in publicly funded schools. Two elders participated in the Saskatoon talking circle and one elder in the Regina circle. Besides opening and closing the talking circles with a prayer and establishing a traditional forum for the circles, they also listened and contributed during the talking circles. Although the elders would sometimes respond to both the findings and the teachers' responses, they responded most fully at the end to close the circles. This is in keeping with cultural protocols of eliciting final and more in depth analyses from elders. Along with helping to set the climate and tone for the circles, the elders offered support and encouragement to the teachers and researchers in their efforts to speak to the needs of Aboriginal education. In many instances, the elders had worked with

Aboriginal teachers in the schools and were knowledgeable of their challenges.

To facilitate the work of the talking circles, copies of the draft of findings as analyzed by the researchers were mailed to each of the participants, including the elders. Each participant was then asked to consider these findings. More specifically, we presented four questions to the circles to encourage their comments on our summary findings. The circles, therefore, had each four rounds, in which each person had an opportunity to talk about the question on the floor in relation to the text she/he had read. These questions were as follows:

- To what extent is the summary of findings representative of Aboriginal teachers' experiences in the public school system?
- What significant experiences, attitudes, relationships among peers, administration, and community need to be prioritized or added to the current findings in order to fully represent the experiences of Aboriginal teachers in the public school system?
- What has been done or can be done to resolve the significant issues facing Aboriginal teachers in the public school system?
- What recommendations should be directed to Saskatchewan Education through this study's final report that can improve practice, inform decision-making and policy development, improve programs, and enhance teacher education?

At both talking circles, teachers agreed unanimously that the summary of initial findings reflected their experiences accurately, although there was at least a significant discussion when one teacher expressed concern that we had toned down the impact of racism that teachers experience, especially as she had experienced it. This said, they urged us and we have thus attempted to offer a fuller and detailed analysis of racism and domination, according to their discussion, drawing upon their narratives for our conclusions. At each of the sessions, all expressed appreciation for being asked to be involved at different phases of the study and looked with anticipation to the concluding report.

In developing the presentation of the findings of this study, we have provided two distinct summary findings based on the analysis of the survey of teachers and the other on the interviews and talking circles. The survey analysis includes the frequency counts and some general discussion as to the some general findings regarding the frequencies. In the Interview and Talking Circle Findings we have used the corresponding narrative data drawn from actual verbatim text to clarify or illustrate the finding. The data is identified with the initials of the interviewer (VS) or location of the talking circle (RT or ST) The number next to the initials of the interviewer corresponds to the identity of the interviewee (6) and the numbers following are the number lines of the transcripts of the interview (VS6.167-170). Finally, we have offered recommendations drawn from the teachers and from our own analysis and have incorporated these into the final discussion of conclusions.

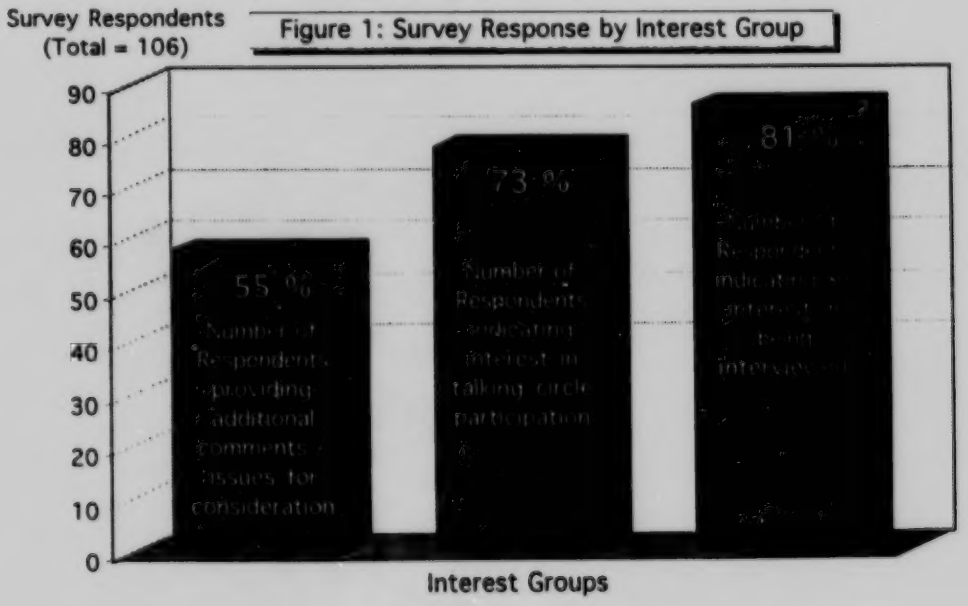
Survey Findings

The questionnaire sought information to create a personal and professional profiles of teachers as a guide to the selection of teachers for interview. In using closed questions with multiple choice options, teachers were invited to produce information that included their tribal affiliations, childhood socialization in rural or urban areas, previous schooling, language skills, university degrees, teacher preparation, certificates of teaching, marital status, dependents, formal language training, and teaching experience and current teaching assignments. In addition, open-ended questions were used to identify areas that they would like to have the researchers pursue in the study.

The initial responses from the open-ended questions of the survey assisted the researchers to create interview questions with a focus on the issues that teachers felt were important. We kept an on-going list of these issues and collapsed them into categories. At the end of the interviews, we often offered to the participants the list of the issues raised and asked them to consider which they thought were significant to them and to elaborate further on them. We have incorporated these findings of the open-ended questions within the interview portion of this report.

Finally, these teachers were asked to indicate whether they would like to contribute further to the study by volunteering to be interviewed or by participating in talking circles. Teachers were then provided with the option to include their names, addresses and phone numbers so that further contact could be made. The graphical results of these efforts follow.

1: Teacher Response Rates



1a: Proportion of Aboriginal Teachers in Saskatchewan

With 10,134 teachers in the Saskatchewan schools, 315 teachers have self-declared as Aboriginal.



Figure 1a: Proportions of Saskatchewan Aboriginal Teachers

I. Personal Demographics

The first section of the Survey asked teachers to identify their First Nations affiliations, the community they were raised in, and in which they now resided, their age and their gender. The summary of their responses indicates that more than half of the respondents self-identified as Metis, or Metis and First Nations, while a smaller number of First Nations teachers appear to be teaching in the provincial schools. The majority of the Aboriginal teachers teaching in the province of Saskatchewan are Metis who have been raised in non-Metis communities whether the communities were rural or urban.

2. Teacher Affiliation

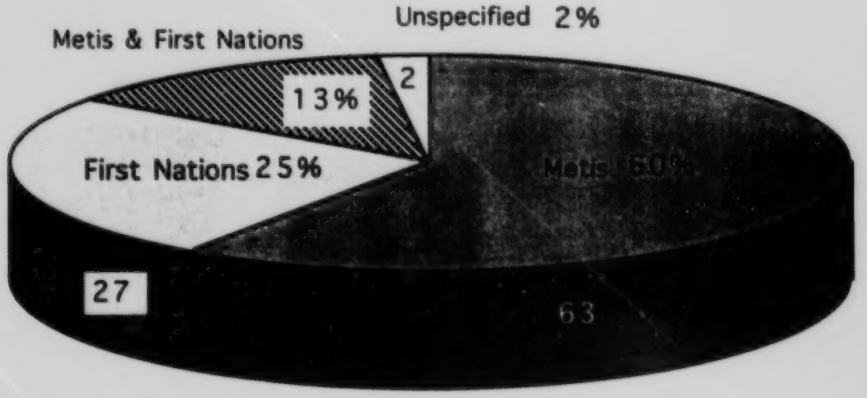


Figure 2: Teacher Affiliation

3. Community Where Teachers were Raised

Cree teachers represent the next majority of Aboriginal teachers teaching in the provincial schools, although most of them were raised in non-reserve communities.

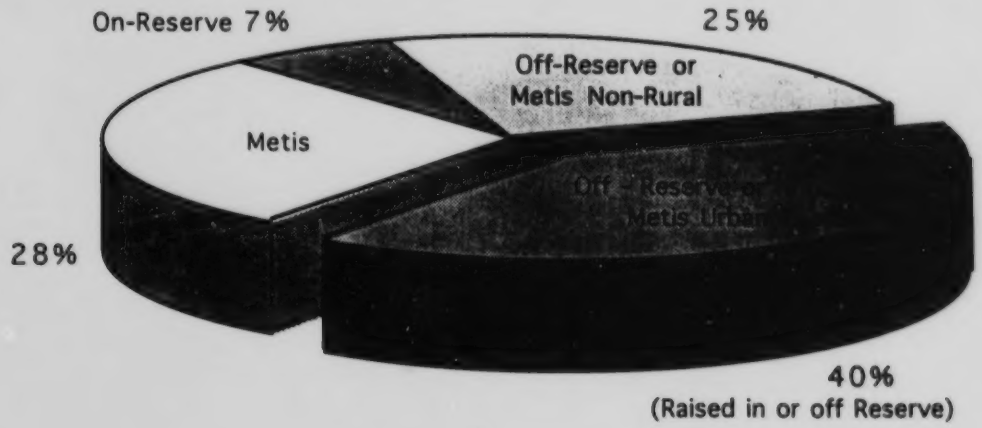


Figure 3: Community Where Teachers Raised

4. Teacher Residence Today

The majority of Aboriginal teachers (69%) in provincial schools, responding to this survey, reside in urban areas or non-aboriginal communities.

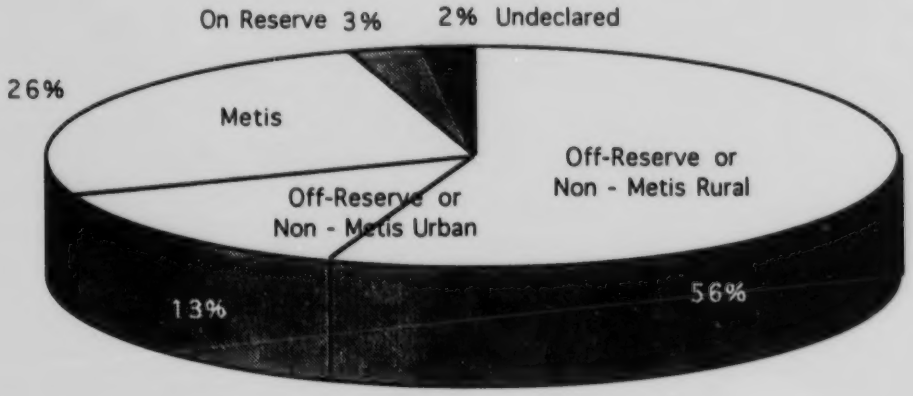


Figure 4: Teacher Residence Today

5. Teacher Age Ranges

The majority of Aboriginal teachers in Saskatchewan are young professionals in the 30 to 39 age range, the next largest proportion of teachers are in the 40 to 49 age range.

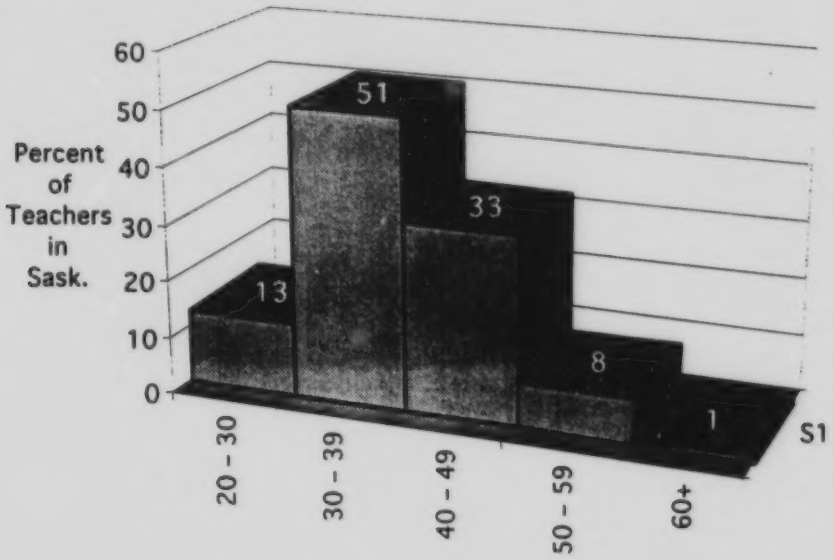


Figure 5: Teacher Age Ranges (Proportions)

6. Teacher Gender Profile

Nearly twice as many female teachers work in the provincial schools. Of the male teachers, 11 are teaching in High Schools, 17 are in Elementary schools, 3 are teaching across many grades and 4 are undeclared.

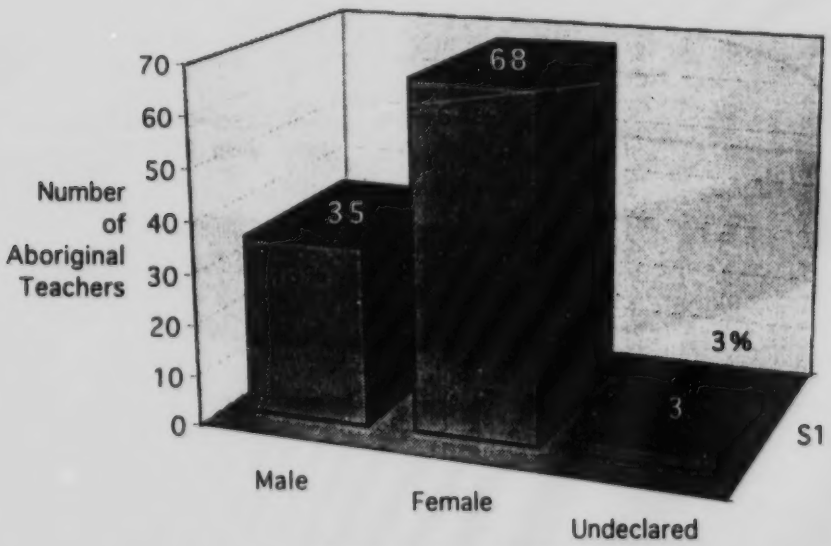


Figure 6: Teacher Gender Profile

II. Family Status

7: Teacher Family Status

The majority of teachers (52%) is living with a partner and have an average of 2.3 dependents. Twenty per cent of the sample are single teachers with dependents and 14% are single without dependents. The average number of dependents for this group is 2.11.

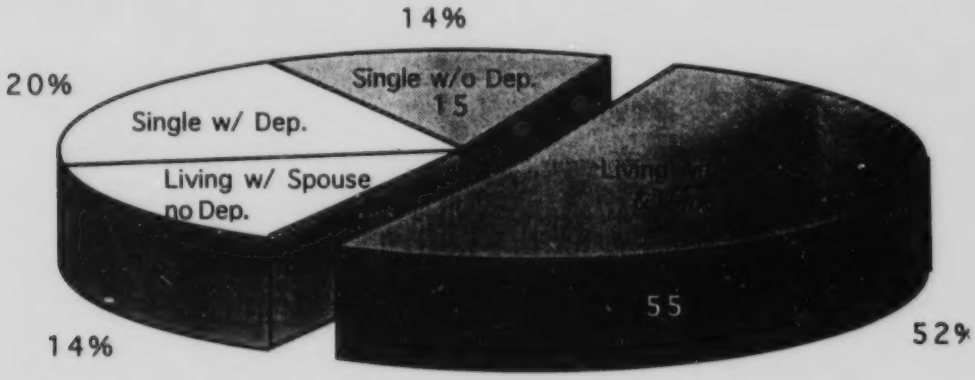


Figure 7: Teacher Family Status

III. First Nations Language Skills

Approximately 26% or respondents report having First Nation's language skills in the provincial schools. Twenty indicated they spoke a First Nations language with six being multi-lingual First Nations language speakers. Other spoken languages included German, Ojibwa, and Nakota. The majority of teachers use English as their only language (78%), while those who speak a First Nations languages (28%) rate their ability to understand and speak the language(s) as very good; however, they rate their reading and writing ability as low.

Speak Only English	78	(74%)
Speak Only a First Nations Language	28	(26%)
Total	106	(100%)

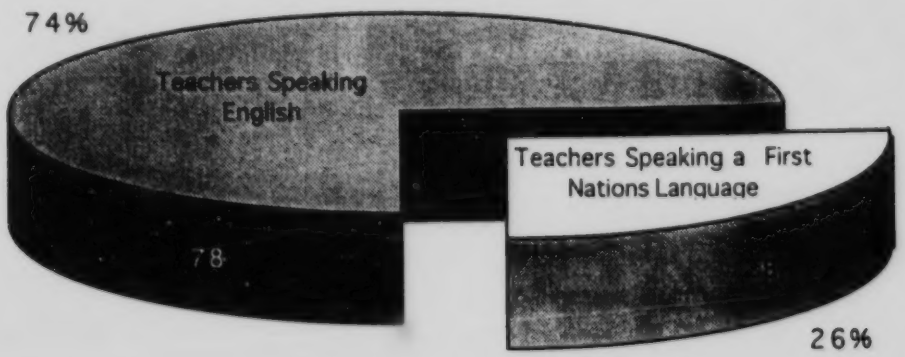


Figure 8: Proportion of Aboriginal Teachers Speaking English / First Nations Languages

8a. First Nations Language Spoken

Of the 28 teachers speaking a First Nations language, 9 out of 37 teachers (25%) speak more than one language. Most of these teachers speak Cree with Michif closely aligned to the Cree dialect. The 28 teachers reported having the following language competencies (see Table 8a also).

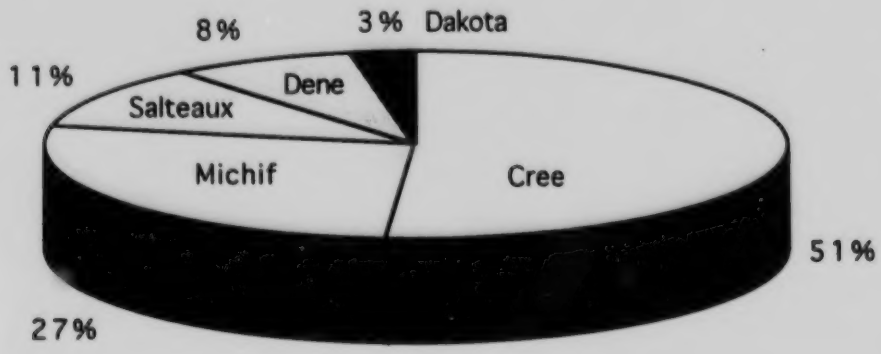


Figure 8a: First Nations Language Spoken

9. Teacher Language Choice (Most Comfortable Language)

The vast majority of Aboriginal teachers are English-speaking teachers who pass on English to their children and use English as a primary language within their homes. Of the 21% of Cree teachers reporting language competency in Cree, only 8% felt comfortable using the language as their first language.

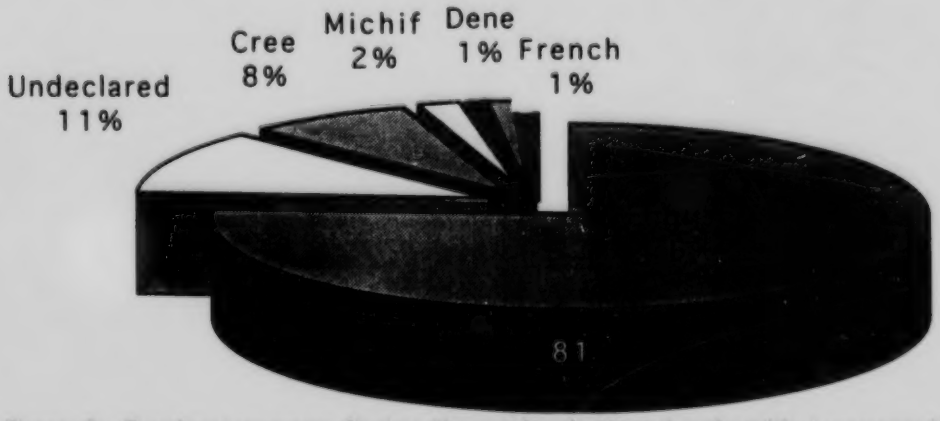


Figure 9: Teacher Language Choice (Proportions): Most Comfortable Language Usaç

10: Teacher Language with Children or Spouse

While there are some teachers who continue to pass on Michif or Dene, all Cree-speaking teachers indicated that they use English as the primary language of communication with their children or spouse.

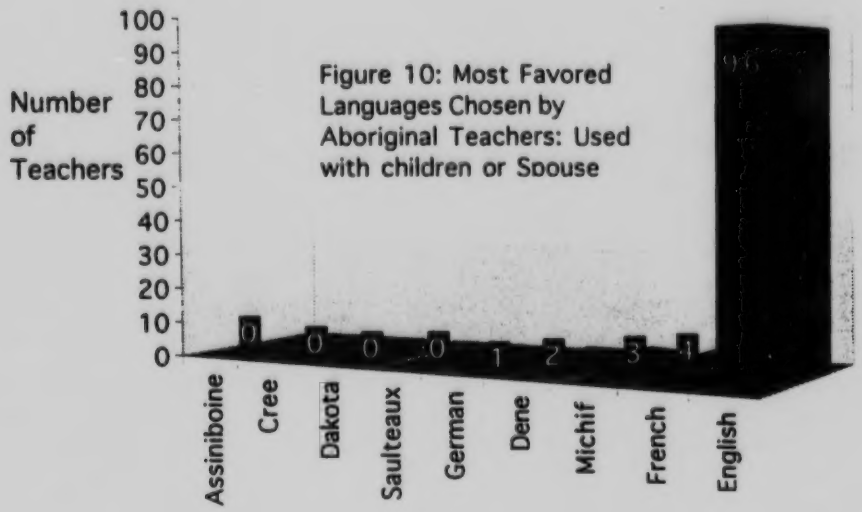


Figure 10: Most Favored Languages Chosen by Aboriginal Teachers: Used with children or Spouse

11: Teachers' Self-Rating of Their Aboriginal Language Skills

Teachers have a generally low rating of their Aboriginal language competencies. The chart below demonstrates that teachers feel that they are weakest in writing skills and reading, and only slightly better at understanding and speaking language.

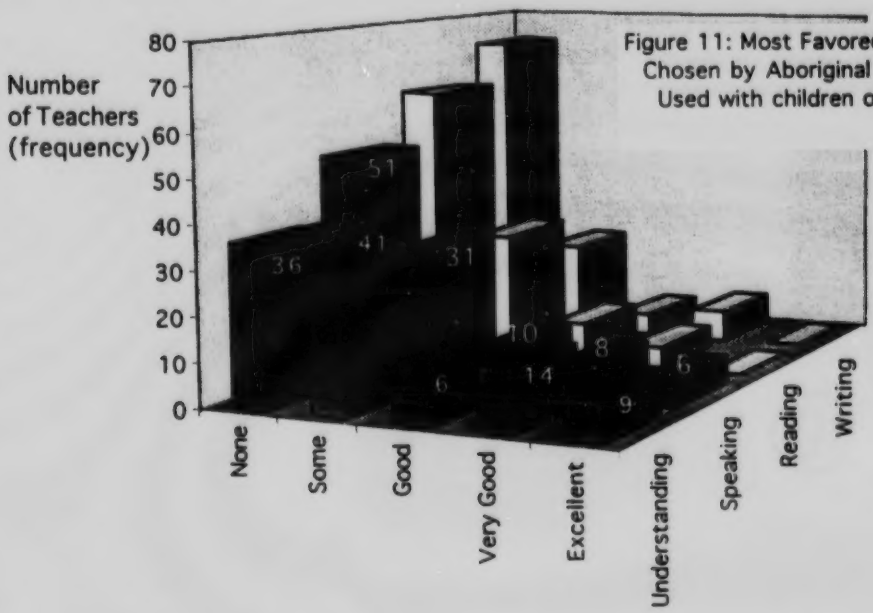


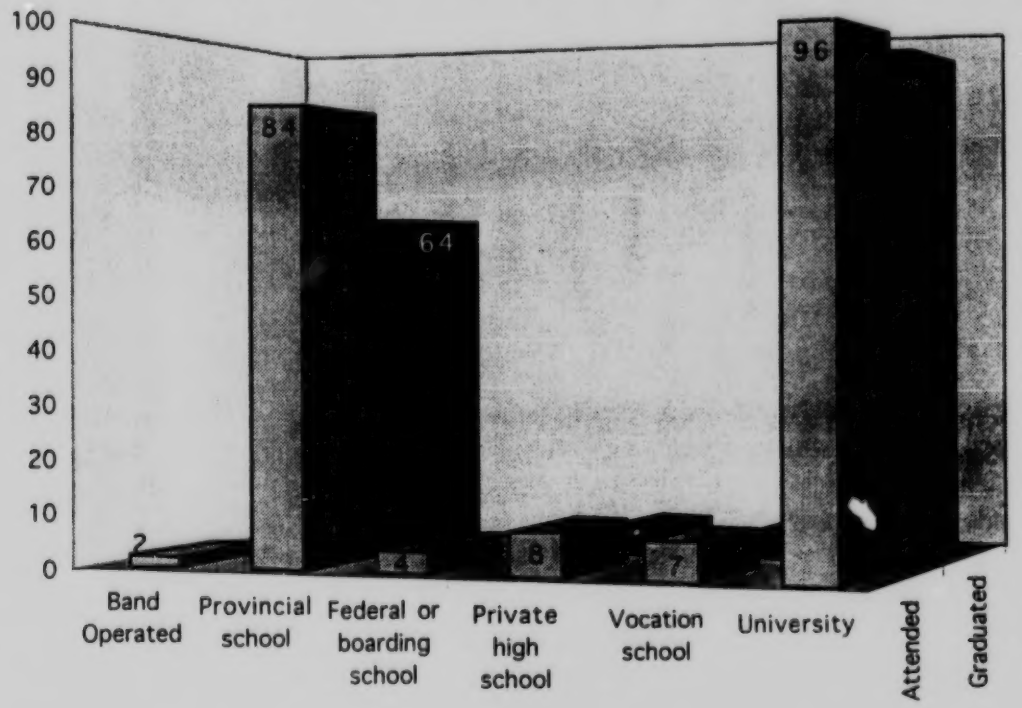
Figure 11: Most Favored Languages Chosen by Aboriginal Teachers: Used with children or Spouse

IV. Previous Schooling

12: Type of School Attended by Teachers /or/ Graduating School

Attendance and graduation rates at university are high among Aboriginal teachers (91% and 89% respectively), while teachers' attendance and graduation rates at provincial schools (over half the teachers attended provincial schools) are 79% and 60% respectively. Over half of the teachers (60%) attended and graduated from provincial schools Less than 2% of the teachers attended band schools.

Figure 12: Type of School Attended / Graduated by Aboriginal Teachers



13: Teacher University Degrees Held

One hundred and two (96%) teachers hold a Bachelor of Education degree. Of these, ten (9%) hold additional Bachelor of Arts degrees, four (4%) have a post graduate degree, and two (2%) hold all three degrees. Very few of the teachers surveyed held special areas of training. There was 1 person reporting for each of the categories of Masters of Business Administration, Bachelor of Music, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Social Work, and Extended Studies Certificate. Less than 1% of the teachers holds a master's degree, and 6% hold a post graduate diploma.

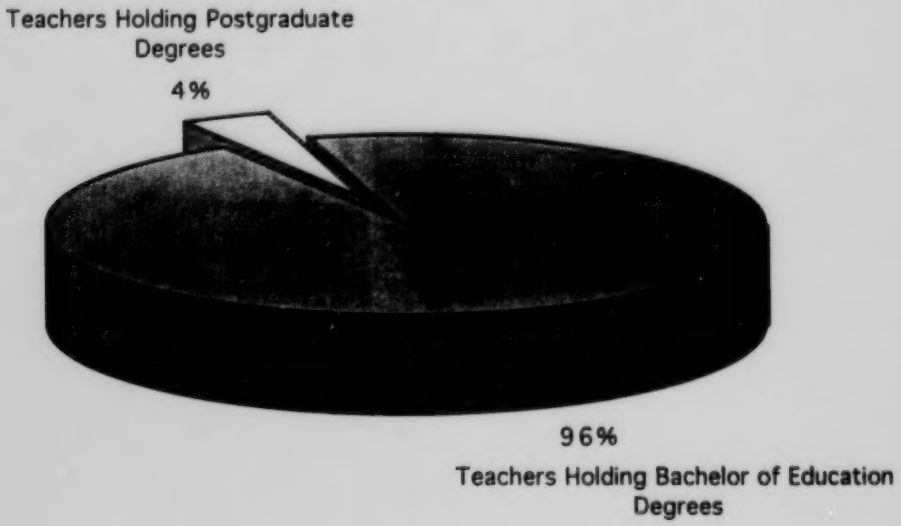


Figure 13: Aboriginal Teacher Degree Types

V. Teacher Education

14: Teacher Degree Granting Program or College

Teachers graduated from several teacher education programs. The majority of Aboriginal teachers in provincial schools are graduates of the TEP programs, with the Saskatchewan Urban Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) accounting for (37%) of the graduates. NORTEP accounts for 19% of the TEP graduates and ITEP for 11%. The TEP programs account for the majority (68%) of teachers' experience One third (33%) of Saskatchewan Aboriginal teachers hold regular mainstream education degrees with Standard A Certificates.

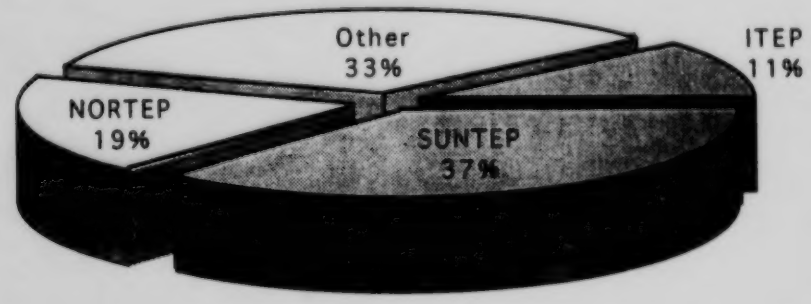


Figure 14: Proportion of Teacher Education within Saskatchewan TEP Progams

15: Aboriginal Teacher Education: Entry Status

Mature entry of Aboriginal teachers has been an important avenue for teachers accessing post secondary education. Forty-eight per cent of Aboriginal teachers are mature entry students.

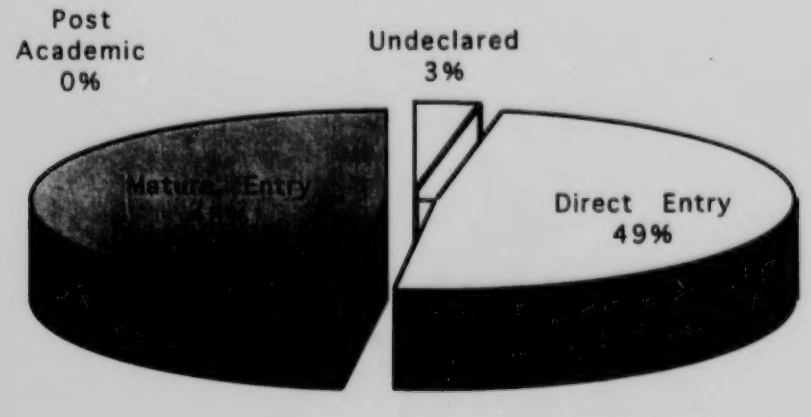


Figure 15: Teacher Education Entry Status: Proportion By Type

16: Type of Teaching Certificate Held by Teachers Today

Almost all teachers have Professional A Certificates (96%) gained through university teacher training.

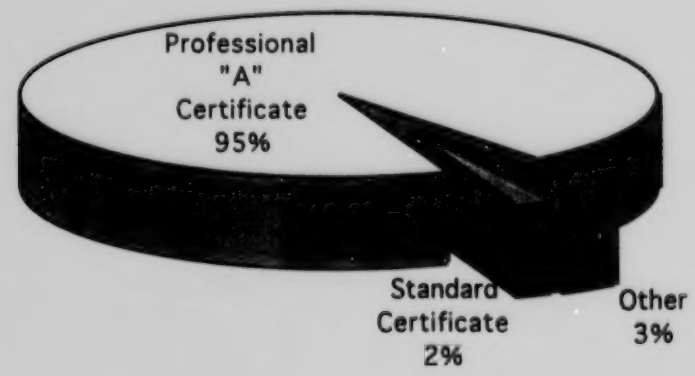


Figure 16: Teacher Education by Certificate Type

VI. Formal Language Training

17: Teachers Holding Formal Language Training in a First Nations Language

Twenty teachers (18%) indicated they had received formal Cree language training. Most other First Nations languages have not received the same treatment of having training in those languages. While the questionnaire did not ask how many of these teachers were now teaching Cree, we do know that thirty-one have taken Cree language training while only thirteen have declared that they are originally Cree speakers.

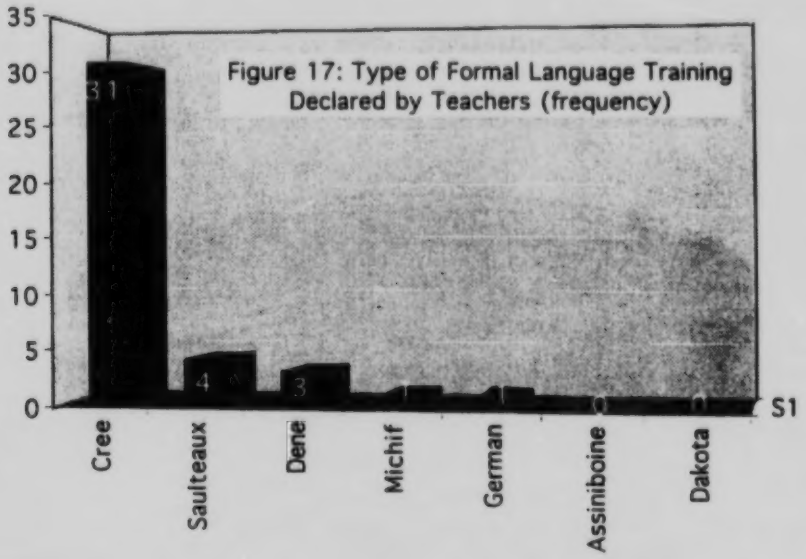


Figure 17: Type of Formal Language Training Declared by Teachers (frequency)

18: Teachers trained in English as a Second Language

Just over half of the respondents (51%) have taken a course or some training in English as a Second Language, despite the fact that this course remains an elective in the teacher training program.

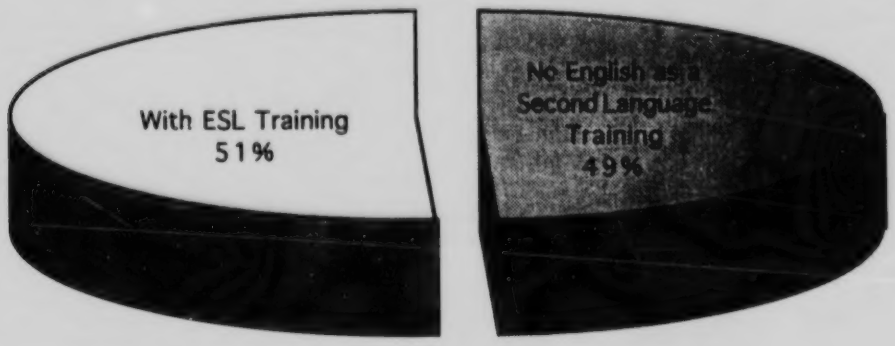


Figure 18: Teachers Trained in English as a Second Language

VII. Employment Information

Teaching experience varied among the teachers, with the majority (46%) of teachers being in elementary or middle years.

19: Description of First Employment After Graduation:

Our study indicates that among the teachers teaching in provincial schools, 81% found classroom teaching employment directly after finishing their teacher training. A further 6% taught as substitute teachers or part-time teachers.

Among the TEP graduates, 93% found teaching employment directly after their teacher training (ITEP 91%, SUNTEP 87%, NORTEP 100%). The majority of the teachers' first teaching employment was in elementary grades, with the next largest portion going into middle to high school.

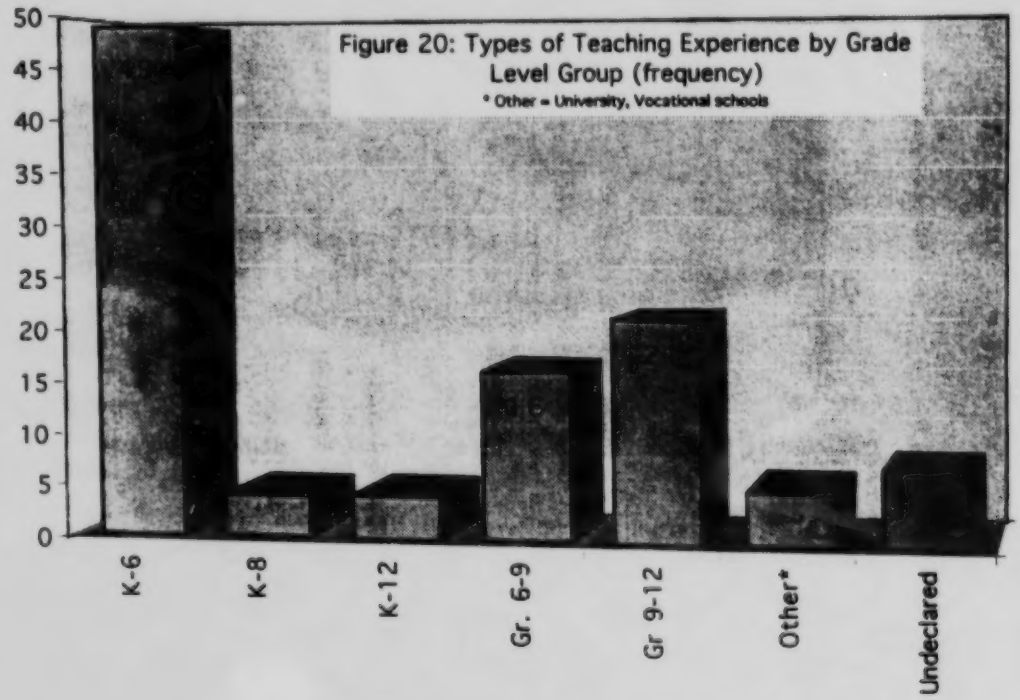


Figure 19: Proportion of Types of Teacher First Employment after Graduation

20: Teaching Experience by Grade Level

The majority of teachers surveyed have taught in the elementary grades in Saskatchewan schools. Because many schools have multigrades through high school in many schools, it was difficult to get a clear picture of how those years of school experience could be categorized. The following list offers the clearest picture of teaching experience per grade levels (frequency of occurrence).

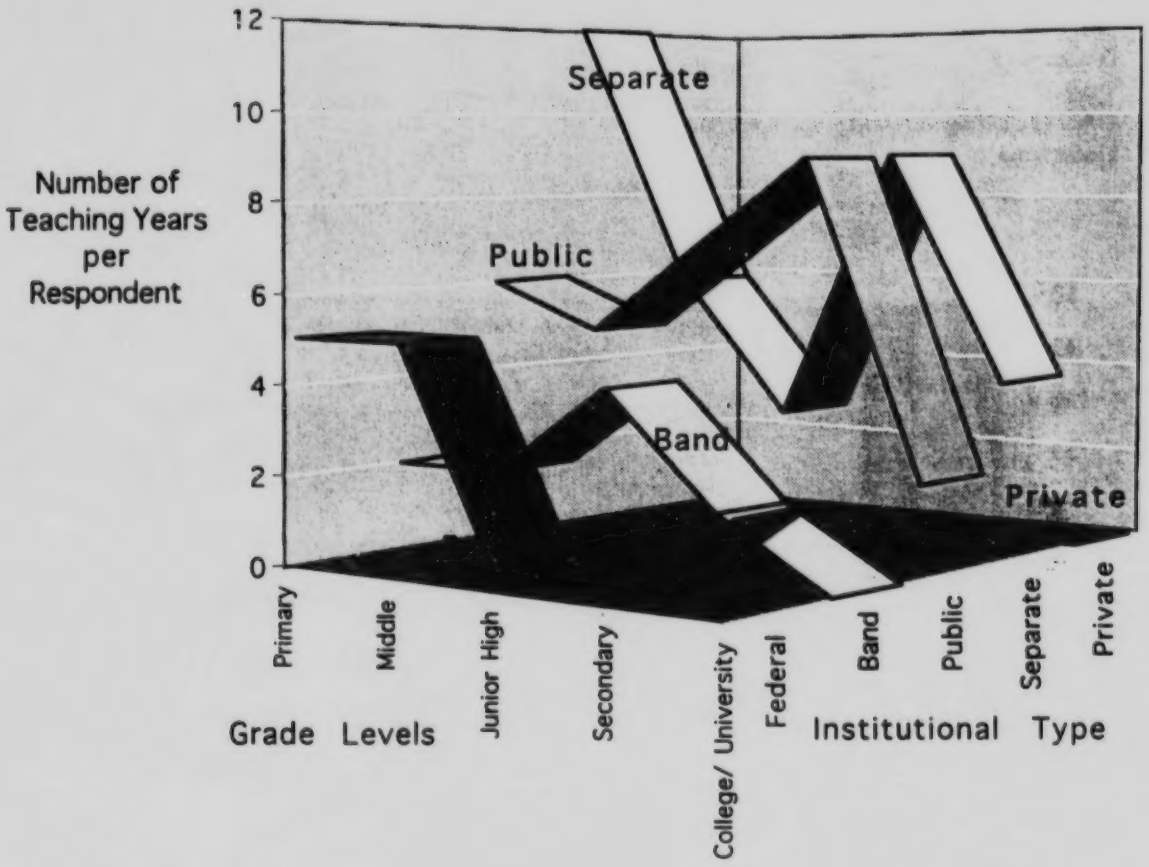
K-6	49
K-8	4
K-12	4
Grades 6-9	16
Grades 9-12	21
Total	94
Other (including vocational and university)	5
Undeclared	7
	106



20a: Types and Years of Teaching Experience according to Institutional Type

There are more teachers with experience in separate school institutions (teaching primary years). The next largest experience group consists of teachers with public school institutions (teaching secondary years).

Figure 20a:
Respondent Years of Teaching Experience: By Institutional Type and Grade Level Group



21: Teachers with Native Studies Teaching Experience

Many Aboriginal teachers have Native Studies teaching assignments.

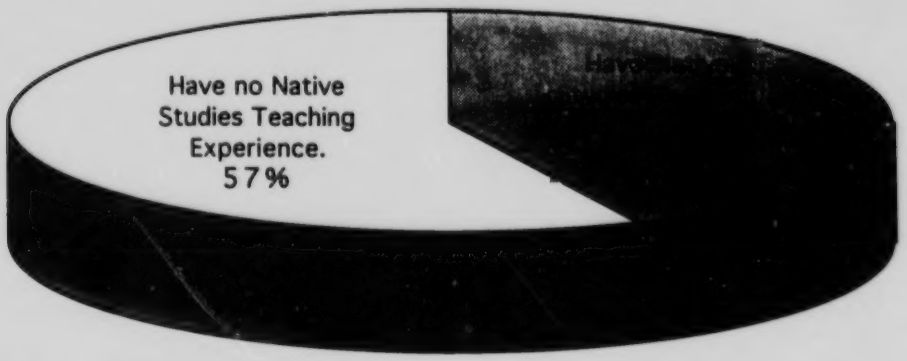


Figure 21: Proportion of Teachers with Native Studies Teaching Experience

22: Current Teacher Employment in Saskatchewan Public Schools

In Saskatchewan, Aboriginal teachers have more elementary teaching assignments. Overall, female teachers contribute most K-12 teaching assignments, with most females engaged in teaching the K-6 level. Fewer males teach than women, with the distribution of male teaching concentrated slightly more in grade 6 to 12 assignments.

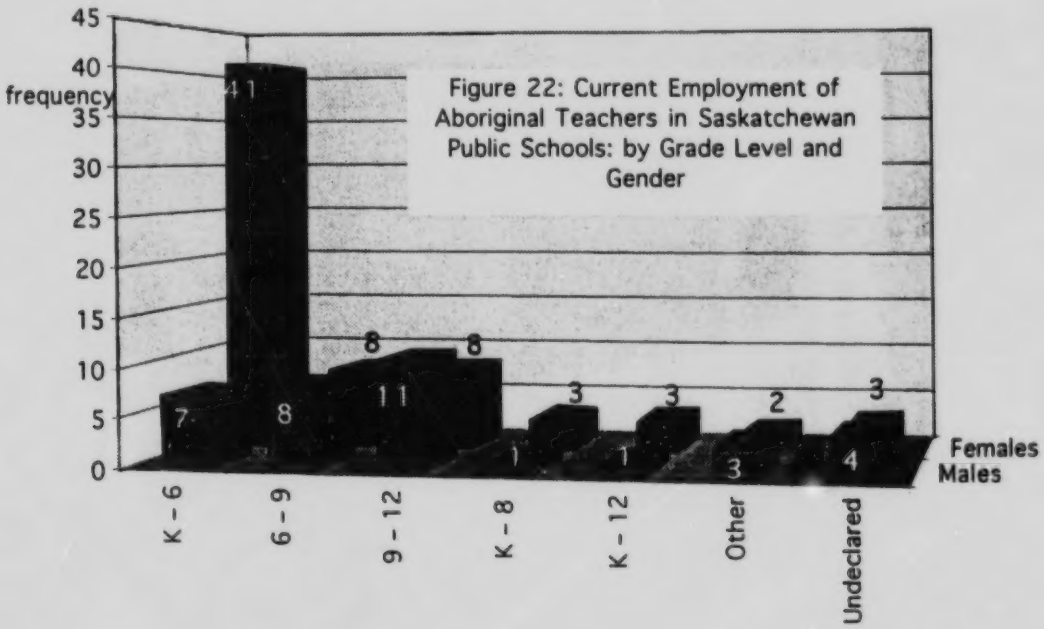


Figure 22: Current Employment of Aboriginal Teachers in Saskatchewan Public Schools: by Grade Level and Gender

23: Number of Teachers Willing to be Interviewed

Most teachers were willing participants in the interviewing process (82%).

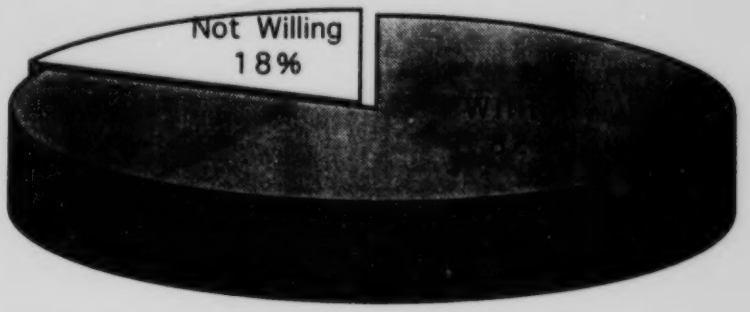


Figure 23: Proportion of Teachers Willing to be Interviewed

24: Number of Teachers Willing to Participate in Talking Circles

78 (74%) were willing to participate in talking circles
24 (23%) did not want to participate in talking circles
4 (3%) undeclared

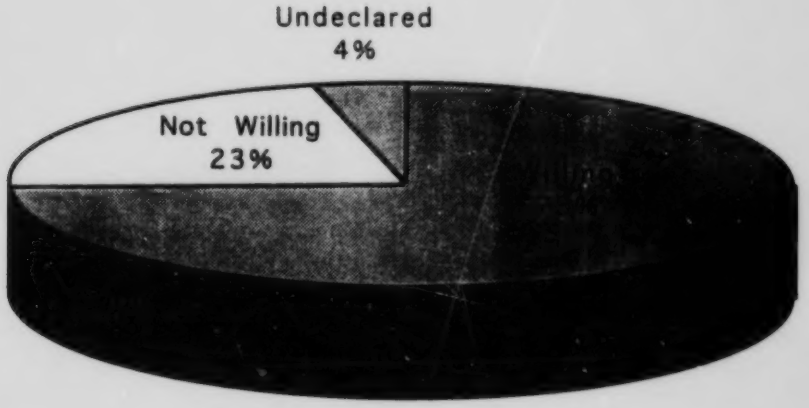


Figure 24: Proportion of Teachers willing to participate in Talking Circles



Interview and Talking Circle Findings

Socialization and Identity of Aboriginal Teachers

Aboriginal teachers come from diverse living conditions and contexts in Saskatchewan. Those interviewed represented a cross-section of those who grew up in a largely Aboriginal community whether it was a reserve or a Metis community, and those who grew up in rural or urban communities with varying degrees of ties with other Aboriginal relatives, people and communities.

My grandmother was Metis but she didn't have any Metis culture at all because she was brought up by her father's parents (VS6.167-170).

Well, it seems that in the last few years, in ——— anyway, it's become pretty popular [to be Aboriginal], like people are pretty proud to be Aboriginal and which is wonderful and in one of his [administrator's] speeches he said yes, "we have Aboriginal teachers here", and I thought yeah, but unfortunately we don't have a lot that were raised in the culture (VS7.602-611).

I can remember a lot of times being asked to go into the office to explain Aboriginal culture. And I found it really difficult because I hadn't grown up on a reserve, I mean yes, I can say well we lived a Metis lifestyle, but I don't know that we really did either. So I was really uncomfortable a lot of times saying [anything definite] or answering any question on Aboriginal culture or giving an opinion on Aboriginal culture (RB6.713-729).

No, I never had any other connections with my culture during the high school years. We would always still go back to the reserve. The only time I saw anything cultural or was involved would be when I went back to the Sun Dance and when they had a pow-wow around here in Saskatoon. And then university, I don't really recall, nothing really stands out in my mind about anything being cultural there (MB2.859-867).

Aboriginal teachers have experienced various stages of identity development. Many Aboriginal teachers have always identified strongly as Metis or First Nations despite challenges created by the social, political and racist environment. Others have experienced denial or shame at being Aboriginal, attempts at being white, or pride and militancy in their identity change. Others continue to struggle against the rigid boundaries created by legal and political definitions which do not fully embrace or explain their experience of being connected to both "Indian" and "Metis" communities.

In Saskatchewan there's nothing lower than being an Indian or looking like an Indian. Whether or not you're Metis, you're Indian, it doesn't matter (MB3.1113-1118).

I had internalized so much of the racism and so much of the oppressive attitudes that I had heard, that I really felt that that was natural, to want to get away from who you were. Get away from anything that was native, anything that was Indian (MB3.160-167).

I still feel like I'm in between (RB6.1261).

I've always felt like when you grew up as

Metis, you kind of grew up between the two. You're not really accepted totally. I found that a really distinct thing as I was growing up. I was not accepted by my Cree cousins.... I was a white person and then the white people I associated with or in general ... considered me Cree. I'm an authority on Cree, you should know about this, that kind of idea that you know all about history and all about the background of Aboriginal people and like identifying me as an Aboriginal person. I'm not sure why. They treated me as total Cree, not Metis or anything, so, you're kind of, between things (MB5.621-645).

And [my mother] still grapples with that because she is still dealing with all the stuff that they went through and all the racism and that gets passed on and the more that you lose, you know the more that you're pushed to assimilate and educate yourself and whatever, the more shame, [there] was lots of shame to be Metis (MB3.205-214).

And the shame that goes with having so much shame of who you are and having to always try to pretend you're something that you're not. There's just, it's terrible, like no one should ever have to feel that way (MB3.343-348).

I denied that [I was] a Aboriginal person because it wasn't acceptable, we were looked done upon as Metis people (ST.1308-1310).

Many Metis have not felt accepted as either being Aboriginal or white, and this has resulted in conflicting messages of belonging. Visibility as an Aboriginal person results in different kinds of experience stemming from racism.

I looked to my mother and I identify very strongly with her, for me she was who I thought a good person was and she was who I tried to be like. And so because her identity was strong in Metis I went that way. And even then because my features are not strong, people would reject it. Aboriginal people say ah no, it's probably so far back in your ancestry and you probably don't know anything about Metis or First Nations people, and for awhile I thought well, maybe their right, and then I thought no I had the same experiences growing up you had, learned the same things from my mother that you learned from your mother and you have no right to say that to me and after that I just said I am who I am and if you don't like it, I don't care. And I still say it and I do what I want to do and I participate in both cultures, the way I want to participate and I give what I want to give and share who I am and if they won't accept it that's okay, and if they don't, that's fine with me too. It doesn't change me. And part of who I am is also the fact that I grew up Roman Catholic Metis and it was a strong thing in my grandmother's life, it was a strong thing in my mother's life and it is a strong thing in my life. And sometimes I think when I read the bible I look back to that part where they ask Jesus who are you? And he just answered with "I am who I am" and all my life people have been telling me well that meant that you know he was saying that yes he was the Son of God and he was god and I think he was just saying why are you asking me such a stupid question, you know, you are who you are. And you work with who you are and you go through life just trying to be the best person that you are. And that you can be with the gifts that you have. And I take that as my support (MB1.1084-1117).

Like there's three in our family that were very dark, the other seven are very white looking. And the three of us in our family got nothing but ridicule most days and the siblings that looked white didn't even want to hang out with us when it came to new friends coming because if they hung out with us then that would mean that they were Indian and then they wouldn't have those friends anymore. (RB/MB1.1641-1652).

I never experienced any of the racism that some of my friends did who were treaty Indians

or who had dark complexions (VS5.76-79).

I don't know if they really visualize see me as an Aboriginal person or as a Metis person and or if they see me as a person that endorses different teaching methods, so like I don't know that (VS3.909-914).

Well I think his was very much different from me because the fact that I have lighter skin, I can pass, when it's convenient for me as white. He can never. Like he always said "it looks like I stepped off a reserve, except I don't have one". Like ... he's totally dark and has grown up with all of the slurs and everything that goes with having dark skin. And even in the family, grandchildren were always, like my uncle talks about the dark skin, the grand children who looked really, really native were not as favoured as the, like the white skinned children, grand children (MB3.251-267)

I personally feel that the more visibly Aboriginal you are the more you are bound to experience racism and I believe that because I have had people say to me "oh, you don't look Native and I guess that is supposed to be a compliment (ST. 2234-2239).

Family

Most Aboriginal teachers have supportive families from which they draw their inspiration and strength in their work. Some Aboriginal teachers are still dealing with emotional baggage from troubled childhoods or marriages. Many Aboriginal teachers live lives like their students, in stress, with racism.

The key influence when I was growing up was my mother. She is the one who kept, really kept me going. Made me do the homework, keep me working, not letting me quit when my two best friends walked out within two weeks of each other (RB4.989-994).

Like she would say "well don't play with them because their native or don't play with them because they're Indians and you never know what they'll do", ... and I remember having a really big argument with my mom when I first started going to SUNTEP because she was still in that frame of mind, like "oh those natives, you know don't go with them, they might do something to you", and finally I just said mom, "they're people, they're human, they're like me", I said, "they're my friends. And I like them, like they aren't like that. I said that's what we're told they're like" (VS5.109-126).

I didn't grow up in the perfect home. And I still don't live in a perfect house, with my family. I had my son when I was very young and I got married when I was young and my husband is an alcoholic and you know I have to deal with all of these issues and still try and help these kids deal with their issues (MB2.1372-1377)

Reflections on their Teacher Education and Becoming a Teacher

Decisions to assume a career in teaching came from many sources. The desire to work with children or being encouraged by other family members have inspired many teachers to the teaching profession. Despite difficult or challenging times in their lives, teachers have made a personal commitment to support change for themselves, individual students and the communities they teach in. Many of these teachers feel particularly committed to helping all students, especially those who are most marginalized. Because many were also never schooled or raised to think they could be a teacher, becoming a teacher was often thought to be out of their realm of imagination.

I really can't remember why I ended up at teachers college (RB4.234-238)

I almost tripped on it (RB4.130).

I sometimes think that [I became a teacher]

just by accident because all I ever wanted to do was work at Safeway and be a check-out clerk (MB1.693-697).

I never, ever, ever, thought about becoming a teacher for one thing, because I just don't think I felt I could be a teacher (VS4.210-204).

The academic and social support provided by the TEPs was instrumental in many teachers deciding to become a teacher as well ensuring their completion of the program. Experiences in the TEP programs were described as enriching, transforming, and necessary as a result of their attention to and support of Aboriginal issues and their cultural content, particularly in the form of Native Studies. This experience with the TEPs was to be the transforming experience for most teachers.

When I was attending NORTEP they did the best that they could for me. And I always felt that they gave me everything on a silver platter. And all I had to do is give of myself and do the best that I could. This is how I've always looked at NORTEP. And so at one time I had said to the director, "If there was some way that I can pay back, it will be when you ask me to be a cooperating teacher and I will say yes, because that will be [my] way of giving back to the program. That's the way I saw it." It was also a dual purpose because each time that you got some teachers into your classroom, you would see something new coming out of the program, so you'd benefit from that. It may be in terms of resources, it may be in terms of approaches, so it was really beneficial for me too in that sense. So you gave and you came back again, you never stopped coming (MB4.1166-1191).

Supportive TEP environment

I had really low self-esteem when I first started in SUNTEP (VS4.299-300).

Everybody gave each other support as well as the, not only the emotional but the academic support as well (VS6.251-254).

I could never have gone through the education program without NORTEP. It's just the home base contact I had, that's what kept me going, I would have never moved for four years (RB41079-1084).

I like the 'TEP' I really enjoy the 'TEP' because you feel a part of something and you feel comfortable. That's why when we went to university I felt so alone and so lost and it wasn't that close knit group that you feel when you're with your peers and in the program there.[At university] some of the classes we were with other 'TEP' students but it wasn't the same because their classrooms are so huge. So I'm glad I went through SUNTEP, I don't think I would have made it if I had went through regular university in Saskatoon. I know I wouldn't (VS5.1476-1492).

In May, when I had a chance to really reflect on the year, and I went through huge changes in my attitude about a lot of things. And now that I look back, I can realize why indeed SUNTEP is set up that way. And I think that it's for a lot of good reasons and you don't realize it. I think the reason why is because it gave me an opportunity to deal with a lot of issues that I had pushed down and that I wouldn't deal with. And a lot of that had to do with becoming proud of my culture, where I came from, who I was (MB3.93-109).

Value of one's history

When I was going through SUNTEP it was almost a learning experience for me, like relearning my culture and teaching me what [it] is... to be Metis (VS1.321-326).

When I got to university, and I got all this information, then I thought, well no wonder. I could try and kind of piece all this information together and then at that time I was finding out about my dad and my mom, what happened to

them. My mom was in a boarding school, and my dad was in a boarding school. My grandma was no longer an alcoholic but she was an alcoholic in her time and didn't provide my dad with an upbringing or home and then when she left the reserve there was really no help for her. Just understanding what the government[did] and all the policies and everything Aboriginal people[were put] through kind of made me see well okay I'm okay now. No wonder there's, [all these problems.] I'm not trying to say I'm blaming them, but there's a lot of things why (MB2.890-904).

Probably one of the biggest things for me was that area of pride that I didn't have for all these years, that I didn't look upon my background as being important. And once I had that instilled in me through the program, and I was able to show that and relate to my students who I was, or who I am, and share my background, share my language and make people feel comfortable (MB4.1380-1390).

When I went they seemed to have really professional people coming up there, people that were really good for the north, good for northern students, native students. We had professors from the University of Regina, and the U. of S. and they really selected good professors so the courses really went well. [They were] really professional type people. [Who] demanded good work. The best thing was the Native Studies part of it, learning about my own background and taking classes in that area, and becoming familiar with some of the, authentic history, the way history actually impacted the people, the history of the nation, that's what I liked the best. It made me feel better about myself as an Aboriginal person (MB5.246-273).

To try to find out who you are, is kind of an empty thing. My schooling helped me a lot. But this identity thing, when I went to university, Native Studies helped me a lot (MB5.657-662).

I keep coming back to those Native Studies [classes], when you realize that there is proud things in our history that we can be proud of, very great things that our chiefs did. I think it did a lot for me [that] there's wonderful parts of our history that we can be proud of and we don't have to be ashamed of who we are. It helped me understand too why these people happen to end up the way they were, into all this substance abuse kind of thing and the kind of social problems that we felt [we had] to deny. Some of the ways the laws affected them and their whole lifestyle changed, like even the whole set up of our community (MB5.670-710).

Self-Perceptions Roles and Expectations of Aboriginal Teacher

Aboriginal teachers feel they are making a significant contribution to the educational system and to their own communities. Most teachers perceive themselves as valued by their peers, administrators and communities for being role models for students. This, however, is not without its own complexities in terms of both personal choices that teachers make and seemingly unreasonable standards to which they may be held. Often teachers are called upon to be experts/authorities in Aboriginal issues, languages, cultures, and knowledge, and the mediator with Aboriginal parents and communities. They are called upon to comment or provide professional development on the many diverse contemporary issues facing Aboriginal people, including having some intuitive understanding of teaching styles and counseling Aboriginal students. Aboriginal teachers are expected to provide in-service on Aboriginal content on an ongoing and informal basis to their colleagues. This often creates a stressful overload for teachers. Many teachers have so much to do that they cannot take on more involvement in communities. Others assume much more than they feel comfortable.

I always wanted to be a really good teacher and wanted that respect for that kind of thing (VS3.1701-1704).

I think my experiences in the provincial school system have been very positive. On the whole I would say that teachers and principals that I've had were very positive (MB4.779-783).

You know I've had a lot of tough times in my life, it hasn't always been easy, I've had some tremendous tough times. But, hanging on to the job and doing a good job, that's always been important to me (RB4.1222-1225).

Being a role model

I certainly felt this Aboriginal teacher is here because she's Aboriginal and she's something that we need because we've got so many little children that could use her role modeling, ... as soon as I [saw] little people that were like me, because I certainly was like that when I was in school, I just wanted to give them all my whole heartedness and as much encouragement as I could possibly do and people recognized this ... (RB/MB1. 1042-1050).

Being an informal consultant

After awhile it got to the point where I thought that the expectations of me were very, very great. Professional development days for instance, the principal would ask me: "So how do you think that we could help the Native children in our school? Do you think that you can plan a workshop for some of the teachers who are interested in the kids that are coming here? How can you, can you develop some kind of units for suggestions to have these teachers invite the way that you teach, or recognize some of the problems that these children are dealing with so that we can change (RB/MB1. 1051-1097).

I've also been approached to give talks to ——, a half hour on the Aboriginal situation and why it is the way it is and there is really, an expectation that whatever can be said about Aboriginal culture, education, children, can all be done in an hour or two (MB1.364-370).

Being an expert

I can remember one time this incident where this little boy was just terrified, he was frightened, they had apprehended him, he had just come off the reserve. ... I don't think he was being defiant, I think he was just scared, so I went to the principal and I said, he's really scared and he's going to run. ... He took off at lunch. And then all of a sudden I became sort of this expert on how kids are going to behave when they come in off the reserve you know it just happened to be that one incident and he happened to be telling me what his plans were... (RB6. 741-775).

If teachers are looking for resources for example, ... I'm the guy they come to see to have the answers or to have the resources and I don't always have them. I don't even have answers. ... if it was my area that's all right, I don't mind doing it, but often it may not be my area but I'm still being asked to be this resource person. Another thing is being on the Education Equity Committee for our school division. We're an active group, a very active group. And it's become an expectation simply because I'm Aboriginal to be on that Committee. I guess even if I don't want to be and there too I end up being an expert, (RB4.689-719).

Expectations are high. I think as individual teachers that we can say yes I will and no I won't and I know that there are Aboriginal staff who have finally said I've done enough now. You know, the expectations of every other teacher are not the same, they are not expected to do the professional development of other teachers, they're not expected to go into other, into classrooms and model teaching and teach a class and they're not expected to do all these other things so I've done my share now, leave me alone and let me teach my kids (MB1.377-386).

I found that as soon as I was hired, immediately I was asked to be the liaison person for the Indian and Metis students in our school and to represent the public system in terms of professional development, in terms of educa-

tion, and in terms of seeing how I could help these children succeed. And at first I thought wow!! This is a very big thing they are asking me to do (ST.1000-1008).

I often get comments from teachers who ask me well what do you know about this and what do you know about that and often times I don't know (ST.1124-1127).

I' m only in my second year of teaching and I'm put into this school and I'm supposed to be this person who has all the answers, who knows about all these things regarding Aboriginal teachers and Aboriginal perspectives, and meanwhile I'm trying to get my classroom [under] control (ST. 1491-1498).

It is an awesome responsibility and sometimes it can make you feel a little like how do I balance just taking care of my students in my classroom to also trying to assist my peers, my colleagues, and their growth in Aboriginal content (ST1511-1516).

Whenever the topic came up about teaching about Aboriginal content or giving information about aboriginal people, I was the expert. I felt that .... I had to deal with it (MB4.649-659).

You were constantly an authority on Aboriginal issues because you were Cree (MB5.975-979).

... yes, high expectations so much more than probably they expect with somebody else coming in (MB5.984-986).

Because you're looked upon somehow as an ambassador or somebody who is a diplomat for Aboriginal people for communities and I think that creates a lot of stress for Aboriginal educators (RT.1332-1337).

Being stereotyped

The one that really gets me the most is because I'm Aboriginal I'm suppose to be an expert on so many issues, like even on First Nations issues. Spirituality, I'm suppose to be the expert on that. And I find that really difficult. And I'm not and like I really get bothered by that. Like people ask me what do people do here on the reserve or what's this all about, well I don't know. I never saw a pow-wow until I was 30, ... that's not part of my culture. I don't understand any of that, that's all new. And they lump me in with the First Nations and that as well has been something that is difficult to change. It certainly has been a challenge that's for sure. So, no by no means am I an expert (RB4.616-640).

Aboriginal teachers are expected to have a handle on everything that is Aboriginal (MB1.423-424).

I was kind of getting a little fed up with all this tokenism and having me as central figure to find all the solutions and problems (ST.1041-1044).

... you zero all your problems on me and I said I have all this baggage to carry that's very heavy (ST.1109-1111).

Because their first time teaching, whether new to a school or community or new to the profession, is very challenging and difficult, some teachers are overwhelmed with the unknown or the demands that they prove themselves once again. Many develop a determined stance to counteract negative attitudes.

Adjusting as new teacher

The one thing that I realized when I first started teaching is that you take all these courses and you get all these ideas, but when you actually get into the classroom and it's yours, where do you start? That was my first impression. When I first started teaching I thought what do I start with? What do I teach? I had no

idea where to start and when I first started teaching it was a 1/2 split and so I had all these great ideas for these children that were coming in and they were blown away the first day because my expectations were too high for these children. They were coming in and I assumed they knew their ABC's and I assumed they knew this and that and they didn't know their ABC's, some of them didn't know how to write their names, some of them didn't know their numbers, they didn't know a lot, they were lacking (VS5.420-450).

I think that's the one thing that all teachers go through. You take all the classes and all the courses and they give you the ideas but then when you get in there, it's you that has to put these ideas to work and that's the hardest part, trying to pull all those ideas together and actually do them. That's what I found the hardest or find the hardest even now (VS5.1526-1535).

There was a lot of areas that I feel I was really lacking when I first started teaching. For example, I didn't know how to do a register either. I knew how to do lesson plans, oh I could do a beautiful lesson plan! Man, I was the Queen of Lesson Planners there!! But it's not the same. (VS2.1575-1585).

...You don't know the ropes and it takes awhile to get some experience and some background how to do this, how to deal with the children with different problems and different issues that come up as a teacher, never mind as an Aboriginal teacher (MB5.955-962).

That first year there at ——— School, it wasn't that wonderful for me, it was pretty scary that first year. Well, for one thing it was my first placement (VS4.426-429).

Well even after the first month I felt better about being here, like the first month was the hardest. I remember because I cried every night, every night I would go home and cry and cry and think what am I doing here? (VS5.615-622).

I guess I had sort of kind of grown into the teacher skin then. The teacher role by this time. I was starting to wear a new hat I guess because I was starting to feel like a teacher and I was starting to feel more part of the system, more part of the teachers. Becoming more a teacher, I guess. And I fit in a lot better there. All the staff was really, really good and really accepting (VS4.832-846).

Adjusting as new Aboriginal teacher

I was too caught up in that first position to prove myself as a teacher to the non-Aboriginal teachers (MB5.892-897).

About three weeks into the school after I had gotten there, it was a Saturday morning, it was raining outside and I was curled up in a ball and just crying and I thought "oh god I hate that school"... and nobody talks to you, they were really snobbish. I think it was just the way I was feeling at that time. and I was thinking I just hate going to work. I hate that job, I've got nobody to talk to there. There was nobody to talk to, really (VS4.1145-1161).

The first year of teaching was really a difficult thing because it was so many things that I had to think about and because I was not brought up to be in a position of authority, and I did not have role models that had been in positions of authority, I had to try to figure out how I was going to do it myself. And because I had no one in my family that were professional people I had to develop skills to relate to other people in the profession by myself (MB1.697-705).

I can't think of people being supportive [of me] like in other recent situations where I find our teachers are being supported by somebody else giving them suggestions and advice and being new, as a new teacher here's how we do this, here's how we do that, here's the unit that I tried that was really neat if you want to try it and even sharing materials and that kind of thing. They weren't like that, I didn't get that

support as a first and brand new teacher. (MB5.904-918).

I've been there for seven years and it's taken me at least five or six years to be noticed, not to, I've been the ghost sitting at the lunch table for a long time and either you make a lot of noise to be noticed, to voice your opinions, to say what needs to be said or you continue to be the ghost and life goes on (RT.1442-1450).

Every new school I go to I have to prove myself again. Every new group that I meet and work with I have to prove my work. And I have to go beyond what other people do to be accepted. It's a difficult thing but it's also something that as Aboriginal people we experience a lot of in our life, and we're strong enough to do it (MB1.525-531).

The staff didn't want me there, I was not welcomed and so I went through a couple of years of not being very welcomed and after a couple of years there were a core staff who realized that I was contributing a lot and doing a lot and making a difference in my own way and in fact they quickly realized that by hiding behind my big brown butt, in many ways, a lot of good things happened for them too, so they would support me (RT.1479-1489).

I also had one person say to me that Aboriginal teachers did not have as high [standards] as other teachers and that I was just going to be a little bit more work (MB1.496-501).

Maintaining a determined stance

. . . they knew that I wasn't the kind of person that was going to give up easy (VS4.546-549).

I do recall feeling you can look at me all you want, but I will never, never fall, because I will not allow that to happen. I kept telling myself that for quite a number of years. I was very, very conscious of that, although no one ever really came out directly and said things to me. I just kind of sensed it. And I was not going to allow anything to cause me to fall. That I would succeed. I was determined and stubborn (MB4.762-774).

It seems like they expect you to fail. They expect you to fail, expect you to quit, expect you to, I'm not sure, to break you or something. Or expect you not to make it, and you're trying to prove to them okay, I'm going to go through with this, I'm going to teach, I'm going to learn to be a teacher, a good teacher, (MB5. 1679-1691).

Teachers with much longer experience in the publicly funded schools have resolved for themselves how to cope with some of the expectations and attitudes of school staff towards Aboriginal people. Teachers with more experience know when to be more vocal and challenging, especially in resisting racism and know when "no response" is the best alternative.

I used to get angry, now I just say, that's a racist comment (VS7).

I try to deal with it with sarcasm and humor (MB1.560)

When I do hear a redneck comment, when I do approach the person about it, I always, approach them as though in my mind I kind of flip it around a little bit and think, what would be the best vehicle. I always approach the person as though they were a child and they don't know. Maybe that's kind of an egotistical thing for me but I've found that when I do approach the person and say, "maybe you shouldn't have said it like that, or you shouldn't have said it like that because it makes you sound really awful, it makes you sound like a real redneck." (VS2.850-869).

I'm taking the risks, to try new things. That's what I'm talking about when I say creativity, to voice my opinion about things, instead of sit-

ting in the background and not saying anything (VS4.1716-1722).

It took me years to start opening up to these teachers and letting them know that these are the things that I feel and if you want to develop yourself and invite yourself to learn, then by all means do it on a different scale, not by looking down on them. And it took me about five years to stand up. One day I let everybody know that I just couldn't handle it anymore. All of this was just too frustrating, hard to deal with, and I think that if we want to learn things we should shut the school down as a staff and really go for it. (RB/MB1. 1151-1165).

I told her, "you go talk to the principal, grade 2's are suppose to go, you're going, speak up for yourself, don't let them boss you around, if that's a grade 2 thing, you're a grade 2 teacher, you go" (MB6.712-719).

Teachers perceive that each individual in the school must take responsibility for making change happen for all students.

When I transferred and she said well we really need somebody in a school that's going to stir things up and get people to change ...her comment to me at that time was we'll put you in a school where hopefully you can influence other people to change, ... I've actually talked to her about it since and I don't think you can do it by yourself. I don't think you can put one person in and do that. So it's not only just changing attitudes about, Aboriginal issues, it's educational issues in general (VS3.1409-1428).

Whenever some kind of issues comes up or we get mail through downtown or somewhere, it just seems like well if it's Aboriginal it just all of a sudden goes into our mail boxes, that's one dynamic of our school and it's like you deal with it and you tell us what we should do about it, that's okay, but just because I'm First Nation or I'm a native person doesn't mean that I'm the only one that should be making opinions or you know making suggestions, I could make opinions and suggestions for people that are not native, that doesn't I mean it goes both ways. So, I don't like that, I feel very uncomfortable (MB2.482-494).

It's interesting in our office, anything that comes in the mail to do with an Aboriginal person if there's workshops or letters or anything, it always goes to our project (MB5.1109-1114).

Every time there's a native thing that comes to our school, it is brought to my desk - everything! It doesn't matter. The Indian-Metis curriculum came to our school, who got it in the mailbox? And I said, I know this stuff, why didn't you give it to somebody else who doesn't know this stuff, you know? Like everything that has to do with native issues it has to come with me first. Like I am some kind of consultant or liaison between the Metis community and them or something and everything comes to me (RT.2310-2321).

While most teachers are content with teaching, there have always been incidents in their lives when this was not the case.

Well I actually, it was when I first started. If I think of the most traumatic thing that happened to me as a teacher is when I first started. ...We decided as a whole staff that if the students were physically, or verbally abusive with us,... if they swore and were very abusive that then they would have to face a suspension. And one day that happened. One of the students was very verbally abusive to me. I went to the child and I had a meeting with the coordinator, the principal and myself. When they said "well what do you think should happen?" "I said well I thought that the decision was kind of made, I thought that if a student was verbally abusive like this that they would get a two day suspension." The principal was sup-

portive and the coordinator said "well I don't think so." I looked at her and said, "isn't that what we decided? We decided as a staff that when this happened, that these were the consequences." She said "but she's such a nice person, she's such a nice student and I've never had any trouble with her and I'm sure it's because you're talking down to her and it's your attitude towards her that has caused her to behave like this towards you, therefore, I don't think she should be suspended because I think you're negative with her."

And so the discussion went on and when it ended, she kindly, touched my hand and said "I know this is very difficult and I hope that you have somebody that you can talk this thing through with." And I said, "well I most certainly do, may I use your phone?" and I phoned my superintendent and I said, "I have a difficult situation that I have to deal with and I really need your advice on it, may I come and see you after school?" And he said "certainly" and I went down, and explained what had happened and I said "it's a very emotional time for me and I am only telling you my side of the story and I know that because it's emotional for me that I may be over reacting and what do you think?" And he said no, "I think it sounds like you have thought things through and that you were right to come to me with this situation." I said "well what can I do, because you know this person can actually destroy my career. If she were to be telling other administrators and other teachers these kinds of things about me, my career would be destroyed and how can I protect myself?" And he told me how I could protect myself and I set the wheels in motion. In the end of it he came in and observed my teaching, he came in and observed at the school several times,

The principal came into my room and they all did their observations and the reports. Then he went to the coordinator and said that his job was to supervise teachers and her job was not to and he didn't want her doing his job anymore. And that's where it ended. So, it was a very traumatic time and I really had to think about what I should do and I could have been devastated, so devastated that I didn't do anything about it and I just accepted it. I know that that sometimes happens to Aboriginal teachers, that they get to the point where they're devastated during internship or during the first year as a teacher and they either don't continue teaching or they don't even continue the internship because of it (MB1.947-1020).

Aboriginal Teachers' Relationship with Colleagues

Having more than one Aboriginal teacher on a staff is a valued experience for Aboriginal teachers. It enabled them to feel connected, relaxed and confirmed.

> *... She was already there teaching, she had been there two years already, she was teaching grade three. When I saw her I felt, well at least there is one native person on staff, so it really made me feel a little more secure and a little bit more, like I had a buddy in the system and I was not just going to be a nobody there (VS4.420-425).*

> *It was kind of nice that she was there cause we used to go out for coffee together [or I would] go to her classroom and talk to her once in awhile. I think the nice thing about having another native person on staff is that you are able to talk about some of your problems and the things that you're feeling. When you're not feeling quite accepted, you have someone else to talk to. And the other person says, yea, I know, I agree, I feel the same way. It kind of validates who you are. [That you're not] just making it up in your head, and somebody else is feeling the same thing. It was real important that she was there for me that year (VS4.623-638).*

> *We have a really good staff. I mean there's times when we don't get along because the*

main issue is prep time. But most of the time it's a good staff to be with. We share ideas. If I need something I just go across to the grade one classroom of the other teachers. We share our materials, we share what we have. We're not like some of them say when they go into other schools they don't feel as welcome because you can just tell that the teachers are like separated or they can feel the tension between all the teachers because they don't even talk to each other, they just look at each other with you know glaring eyes and stuff and it's not like that here. The teachers are really friendly and they do help like if you need something for Science you write it on the board and let people know what you're looking for and usually they'll just bring it down to you. It's a good staff to work with (VS5.800-827).

It's, actually a pretty stable staff, like the four of us, I think the four of us all started the same year, and our vice-principal There were five of us who started the same year and we're all still here. I think we have a really strong staff and a lot of them are from the 'TEP' programs (VS5.1156-1160).

So ——— and I actually had problems with her several times over that year, but we actually spoke out and talked.... So it was nice to have somebody on staff that we could talk things out and feel strong. We had a really good time and lots of the stories we told were so similar you know about aunts and uncles and family dynamic kinds of things that other people don't seem to I guess appreciate as much. We actually had a really good time (VS3.835-857).

But most of our schools that have language teachers in them have high enrollment of Aboriginal teachers employed, of Aboriginal teachers teaching the regular subjects. So they do have that support now, more so than they used to (MB5.1648-1655).

[It] was a really valuable experience for me to have Aboriginal teachers as mentors last year (ST 1500-1502).

While teachers suggested that they felt uneasy in their schools sometimes, many have also found supportive individuals in the school who extended their friendship and mentorship to them which enabled them to overcome obstacles and develop a sense of belonging.

Those who "put kids first. People who really like kids and really want what's best for kids. And I'm thinking of a couple of white teachers I know who do a very good job of that, [they] are people who have very good rapport with kids, that comes first. And they use that for their management. ...they look at problems as an opportunity to teach (VS7.973-985).

... I really didn't want to bother being in that situation, so I just didn't come around. But as the years went on I met a really close friend, and she was the same type of person [as me] but she wasn't native. She's just all heart, she's got a very big heart and no matter what color you are, she treats everyone equal, no matter if you're native or not native. The biggest thing for her is to help the kids and bring up their self-esteem in whatever way she can. She has great contacts with home, she used to work out of Regina. She has really good skills with working with Aboriginal students, so I've learned a lot from her (MB2.452-465).

I remember one of the internship meetings that I was at, and I had a wonderful co-op teacher, just supportive, [she] let me have free reign in the classroom, treated me as an equal. Everyone on staff treated me as an equal, except for one person (MB3.2152-2159).

While the expectation on Aboriginal teachers are seemingly unwieldy, they do not mind being supportive to their colleagues, identifying resources and providing cultural knowledge. Teachers want to be viewed as having expertise in other areas of personal/professional interest, not only in Aboriginal content areas.

I am called upon, yet it doesn't bother me, because at least they're asking. I would much rather them be interested in how do I do this, do you know of something I could do and even though that might mean more time on my hands, I just feel more encouraged by that because I think at least they're doing something. And even if they're coming to me, no one expects me to be the expert or anything. But a lot of times they will ask me because they know that I am, do you know something, do you know about this? Or whatever and I don't mind at all. I find it very encouraging (MB3.2717-2733).

I don't think they can do it all. They can't be a classroom teacher and a consultant to everybody who asks them. But the other thing too is I think that they have a lot to share and if they didn't do it, it wouldn't get done. So there's two sides to it. You can say no, I'm too busy and then let it slide but nobody gets anything done for another year. ... I've been in the system for 17 years and it has been a personal goal of mine to educate teachers about Aboriginal children and to let them know that the children still have the same hopes, dreams, goals as any other children. They still want to be loved and accepted and they still want to do their best and they will do their best for someone they feel loves them, accepts them, just like any other children in the school. And that sometimes they have trouble with the language because there is first language interference. Sometimes they have trouble with the learning style. And like any other children they are ready to learn sometimes and sometimes they're not. I want to personally get rid of the attitude that they're impossible to teach because I've heard people referring [to our] kids [in that manner]. (MB1.431-454).

This letter went around [asking for] workshop leader, ... so I put my name on [to do] rubrics for math , ... that's what I use in my classroom and it's something that I [had] presented at the board office and it was just totally ignored, ... I knew I was ignored because not too long after, many workshops were presented by other teachers [on the topic], but mine was totally ignored (RT.1422-1438).

Many Aboriginal students in publicly funded schools often face many challenges—high mobility, poverty, family problems, and addictions to drugs and alcohol. These conditions present challenges to teachers, many of whom do not understand how poverty, discrimination, and historical discontinuity impact on their students' lives.

We've seen so many kids come in [to] our school [with] drug addictions or alcohol addictions or their family addictions have been so bad that they haven't been able to complete school, ... [Aboriginal students are] doing things that a lot of the non-Native staff can't recognize or understand because they've never been through it and sometimes I try and explain to them that you know it's not their fault and yes we are the ones that will make the ultimate choice or decision but sometimes it's so hard that they don't understand but we're getting through to some of them. And then some of them don't seem to be accepting what is real and I mean that's the difficult part (MB2.519-530).

I think once people go to an inner city school or a school where the population is very at risk, they'll soon find out that these are children that only want to be loved or they only want to have, only want to do well in life, but it's very difficult because of all the barriers and I think the same for families I'm sure that the parents only want them to do well but they don't have the knowledge or the skills and the means to help their children do that. And sometimes I think teachers lose sight of that and I think they only focus on well this kid is having reading problems or he can't do math. All the other dynamics of life aren't even [given] a thought sometimes, I think and they should be always considered. Maybe a kid does lie once in awhile or maybe he lies more

than he should, but I think that we should be able to trust them and if we do trust them I think that they should be able to trust their teacher and have a mutual relationship of trust and respect, the teacher [must] show that (MB2.1930-1948).

This teacher I was talking about earlier and a few [others] who have been in the system a long time, they come into the classroom and in the staff room and they hate being in that school. They hate working with kids and they hate certain families and they wish they didn't get that group mixture. I'm thinking what are you doing here? What justice are you serving these kids to come into the classroom with these preconceived notions of these families and these children, you don't want to be here. And I'm thinking God, I hope I don't get like that when I'm at [it] 20 years (RB/MB1.2391-2410).

Staffroom interactions on Aboriginal issues often create tension and uneasiness for Aboriginal teachers, especially when they feel they are called upon or expected to respond to all the issues.

I find the staff [room] can be the most inhumane places when they get talking about kids. And the comments, well he's an Indian kid, ... it's like that has a label with it. ....They are very prejudiced, so I think we really need to look at that, right at the university. I don't think we should accept those people (VS7.1322-1356).

I'd go out for lunch, I really didn't go to the staff room because ... there's always articles in the paper, oh the natives did this, natives this, or this just happened or you know there always has to be something new in the news and it just seems like you're always kind of sitting there on the hot spot or hot seat and people might want to say something but they don't say anything because you're around. (MB2.439-448).

When I first went to this school I had a very difficult time and I always do the first year that I'm in a school. When I went in I had one of those teachers who would clip everything out of the newspaper that mentioned an Aboriginal person and put it on the door, on the white board in the staff room. Anything that happened, he'd always come and ask me, did you read about this or did you hear about this or did you see that on TV(MB1.487-495)?

Despite the well meaning and the goodheartedness of some colleagues, teachers feel that racism remains invisible to them, manifested in their negative comments about Aboriginal students, families or other teachers.

Our guidance counselor was talking and he was saying something about our non-Aboriginal population and our Aboriginal population and then he started talking about "our normal kids" and then [it was] like everybody's eyes were on me, he was talking about the abnormal kids being Aboriginal, the ones that are always not doing things right It sounded a lot more obvious than how I'm saying it now. I turned all red and everybody was looking at me. I just had to leave because I was going to start crying. I believed that I had a connection with him. And then it sounded like he was saying that we were not normal. And then he apologized to me and said that he was sorry, he didn't mean for it to come out like that. That was only one instant where something like that had taken place that I was actually aware of how many other instances had taken place without me being there or without him not being sorry for saying something that he actually meant? There's all those kinds of things that take place but that's your work place, you've got to go back (MB2.571-596).

I think some of the redneck teachers, [are] making comments. They're very quick to stereotype the Indian teacher or the Japanese teacher or the black teacher. They're very

quick to stereotype those teachers. I've heard a few comments and I've always addressed them of course. I don't know when to shut up sometimes, but that's okay. I suppose I kind of think, that geez if these teachers are saying these comments to other teachers who are their equals, in terms of professionals, what are they saying to kids in their classrooms? What are they portraying and that scares me because you know that's a commonality that we all as human beings share is education in school. (VS2.806-836).

I'm sure if I asked the person that made those racist comments and told those racist jokes, are you a racist person, she'd go no, and she'd argue with you. She'd say I am not. No way am I. (VS3.2071-2077).

And it is very scary because people that don't see themselves as racist say racist things all of the time (VS3.2113-2115).

That racist attitude is very invisible to them and it becomes a way of life to them. And they just assume and expect you to know this stuff and they certainly don't make any of those connections themselves and take the ownership for it (RT.916-922).

Aboriginal teachers perceive the lack of Aboriginal content integrated into the current curriculum as the result of teachers' lack of knowledge about Aboriginal issues and content and/or their lack of understanding of its significance and thus offer Aboriginal content in a limited additive model.

... all teachers need to take Native Studies (VS6).

I think they should make it mandatory [that] all teachers take Native Studies classes. You know, I really, really do (RB4.966-969).

I think more and more people are becoming more receptive to the idea of inclusion of Indian and Metis content although many of them still say "well how do you do this, where you do start?" (MB4.955-962).

Native Studies is a must to get people to learn. They need to have that background. I think everybody in the B.Ed. program should have a Native Studies class, some general historical background for the kids, because otherwise there's such a lack of understanding. The teachers come in there and [wonder] why are these people living the way they are? There's 80 to 90% unemployment up in the north. Parents are not working and all day long they're at home. Kids go to school a certain number of years and then get, onto the welfare case load. It's a sad situation up there and the teachers come up from the south and [don't understand] (MB5.2249-2272).

Aboriginal Teachers' Relationships with Students

Teachers described themselves as advocates for Aboriginal students. Many teachers shared stories of the strong connections and identification they had with Aboriginal students and the positive impact these relationships had in the students' learning and performance in school. Aboriginal teachers maintain high and positive expectations of all their students.

I thought that being an advocate for children and being a teacher was kind of synonymous (MB1.154-156).

I do listen to parents and I feel very pressured by parents and I want to please parents and children, especially children (VS3.2153-2157).

I really use a lot of personal history. I always say "well when I was going to school, this was where the school was and I use a lot of personal history. My language, I integrate it in almost every topic (RB4.141-146).

I like having relationships with kids. I really

found that wonderful, just really rewarding, you always get it back. I love it. It was my birthday not too long ago and one of my kids, an Aboriginal kid actually, from one of my first years at ——— which is like 11 years ago gave me a call and wished me a Happy Birthday. (VS7.881-897).

I've seen some of the Aboriginal teachers taking the time and actually bending down and giving them a hug, letting their head touch the top of their shoulder or are putting them on the side and kind of tucking them under their arm kind of thing, you know which is more of a hug, you know it's more of a substantial human hug (VS2.1511-1520).

I try to be positive and try talk to them frankly about things and look for the positive things to praise as opposed to a lot of people who look for the negative things and blow the negative things up and so of course more negative things happen because that's the whole syndrome of negativity (VS3.2222-2232).

I can give an instance of a little boy... I was moving him forward and joking with him and instead of being the strong disciplinarian and putting the thumb down I turned it into a little joke and laughed about it and in the end just making light of certain things instead of being really heavy. And then in the end, him really changing and in the way he dealt with other children and he wasn't physically abusive towards them anymore and his interest in learning, his desire to learn to read and to do things, that's probably the really positive thing, because you see them become a learner instead of resisting learning (VS3.2182-2215).

Our children are very valuable. And I think that sometimes educators may have very pressing times, very trying times, for themselves, maybe they forget that kids are very valuable and that they need to be respected. I always end up coming back to the respect because I think a lot of people say kids don't respect adults, kids don't respect, well it's a two way street. But it starts with the adult. I think sometimes in schools that needs to be more evident (VS2.2718-2735).

I fully believe that if I respect the kid, they're going to respect me. I don't talk down to any of my students. I completely look up to everything that they do and I'm forever encouraging and praising and they're forever at my desk or in my face, wanting more and it seems the more that I want them to do, the more that they do. And they absolutely amaze me, what they hand in, what they can do when they receive all this kind of love (RB/MB1.636-649).

They know what my expectations are from day one. I go through them and I say, this is what I expect of you through the entire year. If you don't like it, you can tell me right now and we will discuss it, so my expectations are quite high, I always get them really high and if there are some that don't make it, then I can always bring them down a little, even though they don't know it (RB/VS3.1109-1120).

The first year that I taught I had a little native girl in my classroom and the first day she came in, she looked at me all day and at the end of the day she said to me, "you're an Indian aren't you?" And I said, "yes, I am." And she said "I'm an Indian too." So, I think from there, that's where ... I realized that I made a difference to her. ...she started relaxing around me and enjoyed being around me and I finally started to open up,... I found they would start opening up to me, telling me things, they enjoyed being around me. ... then I thought well, gee I'd like to be the best teacher that I could be for them. You know give them all the opportunity that I could give them, not criticize them, encourage them, make them feel like they could try, they could do it. I'd always hear "I can't do that, I don't know how to do that, teacher, I'm stupid or I'm dumb". I would say "yes you can". I did a unit on all about me and what do you want to be when you grow up, and one of them said well "I want to be like you teacher. I'm going to be like you". So, it was

sort of a gradual thing, my realizing how important I was to them (RB6.98-141).

Teachers are dismayed with the prevalence of stereotypes about Aboriginal children, parents and community, and the high numbers of Aboriginal children placed in special education and the low expectations.

The attitude that the kids can't succeed as well on the West side is coupled with the idea that there is a lot of Aboriginal children in the school (MB1.476-483).

... so many of those kids, ... we've had recommendations from the grade 8 teachers saying oh well I bet you my year's income that you won't keep that student there (MB2.1225-1231).

One teacher said to me one time about a student, "she's such a nice little girl but she's hanging around with so and so and a year or two down the road she'll probably be on the street." And I said "if that's your expectation of her and the expectations of the adults in her life then she's not going to do anything but what they expect her to do" (MB1.585-592).

When they are talking about Aboriginal students, they are always attaching the label of "at risk", ... it really bothers me because there are a lot of kids that are not at risk (ST.1632-1641).

I don't agree with labeling process of kids (ST. 3648).

There are too many Aboriginal kids in special needs (VS7).

I've seen some of the stats that pertain to Aboriginal kids. And there's more money to be made by a school division if they designate Aboriginal kids Special Ed. So that really means some serious investigating on accountability - major (RT.3617-3624).

I found that so many teachers out there in the system they don't differentiate between First Nations and Metis sort of thing like that, they quickly expect you to solve all of the woes (RT.895-899).

Some people think all native kids come from troubled homes and that there's always struggling, things going on in the home and you know broken homes and alcoholism and that's not so in my classroom. Not in the least (MB3.2389-2396).

There's no such [thing as] teaching a Native child, because every child is uniquely the same, they're all alike and different and if you're going to be in there and you want to teach and love them, it doesn't matter who you are, you're able to do it if you love those kids(RB/MB1. 1170-1184).

Aboriginal teachers are often placed in classes or schools with high risk students, and even though these teachers realize their value to such students and consider this experience rewarding, it is nonetheless stressful.

Seeing the kids succeed is something that keeps me going. Like when they first walk into my room they're so scared like "I can't do this!" and you have to give them the confidence to keep going, to know that they can do the work, and they can succeed. Being a role model yourself, you did it, they can do it (RB/VS3.61-71).

Because of the classroom I work in now and I enjoy working there even though you know there's a lot of behaviour problems. I don't think I would change. ... A lot of times I hear teachers saying I'd like to get out of here, I'd like to go to a normal school. But I always view myself as working in an inner city school, with inner city kids. Even though they have all those problems, I feel comfortable there and I think I know the families, I know the people,

the parents, the lifestyle.. (RB6.1674-1692).

I couldn't see myself going anywhere else, but sometimes when it's so stressful, it is very stressful, but when you leave this school at the end of the day, I always leave smiling cause you know you work with these kids, you teach them things, you laugh with them, and for the most part you have good days and you can see it in them too when they stay back and they are hanging around your office not letting you get things done, you know so it's obvious that they enjoy being there (MB2.1219-1224).

For those Aboriginal teachers teaching primarily non-Aboriginal student populations, the opportunity to challenge stereotypes and to have positive relationships with their students have also been satisfying. Teachers, however, feel a measure of these parents' and students' resistance to Aboriginal curriculum content.

One student said "the biggest thing that I've learned from this unit is that I am racist." He went on to describe, how he didn't realize, so many things and how he had gained a lot of insight. And I thought oh my god, this kid is in grade 8 and he had gained so much that a lot of adults won't even understand (MB3.2119-2130).

I had a phone call three weeks ago that was screened by the principal... She wouldn't let the parent talk with me because the parent was very, very upset that this little girl was going home and wanting to be an Aboriginal person, she didn't want to be Ukrainian anymore. So then I got the phone call and it wasn't screened. I got this phone call and this mom was really upset and this mom was somebody I really thought the world of and I thought you know I don't really know where you're coming from and where you're getting this information, and why you feel this way I said, but please come and we'll have coffee and we'll talk. ... So she came and talked to me and at the end of the year I got these really beautiful dream catcher earrings that her little girl and her made and they put it in this great big box. Yes. She was able to come full circle and understand what we were talking about in our room. And this little girl was just impressionable, like they are at 11 and 12 and idealistic, wanting to be like their teacher (RB/MB1.893-956).

Last year I had a student, we were showing videos and things like that because the unit that I teach in my Social Studies unit is on culture and it's all based on Aboriginal culture and she goes, she was a non-Native girl and she says "why are we always learning about Aboriginal this, Aboriginal that" (MB2.1074-1080).

Aboriginal Teachers' Relationships with Parents and Community

Teachers are tested in multiple ways by both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal parents and communities. Aboriginal teachers' Aboriginality poses multi-faceted challenges regardless of the community they teach in. In non-Aboriginal communities they may be stereotyped in terms of negative characteristics. Similarly, in Aboriginal communities they are required to prove themselves as capable as their non-Aboriginal colleagues or they may be challenged in their cultural values and in the personal choices and decisions they make in their own personal professional lives.

Nonetheless, many Aboriginal teachers also perceive that they are appreciated by Aboriginal communities and parents for the important contributions they make in education.

Parents that say oh my child loves you, they would do anything for you. You're so good to them. Those kinds of comments really make me feel good. And they make me feel glad that I

chose teaching (VS5.927-932).

I think most of the parents are pleased with what's happening (VS5.1210-1212).

There's a parent that always brings in treats for the teachers and treats for the kids and she'll say "I know how hard your job is", she'll say, "it's nice that you're doing such a good job" (VS5.1223-2229).

In the past I've had parents say when I taught Kindergarten, well I want my child in her room. I think it's partly because I'm native. I seem to get along well with them, mind you of course I'm soft spoken and I'm really not very threatening to people. ... But, I seem to get along well with them. I've had parents who I've had their children in two, three years ago and they'll still buy me Christmas presents and Christmas cards and they'll still come and talk to me in the classroom. And they'll say, gee it's too bad you weren't teaching Kindergarten because I'd put my daughter in your classroom, which is nice, it's nice to hear that cause you know, it's like a pat on the back and makes you feel good (RB6.854-879).

... most of the parents know who I am, they know me, they know my expectations because they've heard it from the kids and they know exactly what I need from the kids and that's respect and in turn the kids respect me, I respect them, they respect me (RB/VS3.220-227).

That's one leverage you use when you're a Native person. You just tell them, well I'll call your mom to come in and right away the kids ... tend to behave themselves (RB/VS3.397-401).

Parents coming up to me saying there's been improvement or they [say] I can talk to you more, I'm not scared, like I'll [be] talking Cree and a lot of times I know they just freeze, ... like parents kind of freeze ... it's just that personal contact or just having them coming in, I really find that rewarding, ... like you don't have to hide from me I know who you are, the connection is there, ... you can almost see that relief in them. I find that really rewarding and a lot of that is not through training, I mean I'm glad to have gone through the four year teacher training but at the same time, I'm glad to be in the same background as them. It's almost like you can relate to them a lot better. But, I don't know how I'd do in the city (RB4.193-225).

I still say the positive out number the negatives. Yeah. Because even if you have a really challenging parent or student or whatever, we can make that connection of understanding each other (RB4.480-485).

Although it is rewarding being a teacher, it is not without its own challenges; in particular, many expressed frustration at their inability to affect children's lives outside of school.

You [may] have parents coming in who are mad about something that they really shouldn't be mad about (VS5.950-953).

The frustrating part is seeing the kids get hurt... when the kids... come to school with problems I mean they're your problems in the classroom as well. ... Like I came home today all knotted up because of these problems and I think god, they're not my problems! (RB6.333-362)

I sometimes get frustrated with parents when they're not supportive of their children, when they put their children down, when they've allowed their children to take on the responsibilities that they have as a parent, we have some children who come to school and they are the ones that are looking after their brothers and sisters and making sure that they get up and come to school, making sure that they're eating, they're the ones that are looking after the home and they're actually looking after their parents. ... You can't take them all home and a lot of times when you go to Social Services or other agencies, they move so slow that the situation never gets resolved and that

may not even be the answer. ... I know that even though their life is hard, there is no other place they want to be than at home with their parents. And what are we doing as a society to support them in their request, all they want is mom and dad to be okay. They don't want to go away from them. They just want them to start being okay. And that is probably the most frustrating thing that I face. And it's something that I can't do anything about (MB1.906-939).

Parents with children with problems are not as supportive of school as children that are doing well, ... at parent/teacher interviews, you don't see the parents that you want to see, [those whose] kids are having trouble (MB5.863-879).

Aboriginal teachers are aware of particular expectations among Aboriginal parents that they cannot always fulfill or dispel.

I think initially they're sometimes a little shocked that I don't know as much as they expect me to know. A lot of the First Nations parents, for example assume that I am First Nations and that I should be aware of some of the cultural aspects and I'm not. ... It's interesting these expectations things. ... It does add some pressure on myself (RB4.742-760).

I was once asked by a native mother to be the grandmother for one of her children. I guess her little girl used to go to the reserve and be close to her grandma, and she I wanted to know if I could be a grandma to her, sort of take the grandma's role. And I had to politely tell her that I couldn't do that,... replace the grandmother. So I thought it was quite a big handle for me to try to pull off when you're trying to be a teacher of 20, 25 kids. So I had to say that I couldn't take this little child's hand and walk all over the place with her in the school yard, you can't do that when you've got 25 students in your classroom. She was quite upset and mad at me and she called me names and told me I was racist just like the rest and so, I got it from both ends (VS4.745-779).

The one comment I had heard in the past was, I hope I don't get an Indian teacher they don't know how to teach, ... I'm assuming that's why I have to prove to them, ... but you feel like well I'm up to par (RB4.288-306).

Teachers perceive non-Aboriginal parental attitudes as having a significant impact on students' attitudes towards Aboriginal teachers, students, and content, as well as on education in general. Non-Aboriginal parents' initial response to Aboriginal teachers can often be negative, although with time and experience Aboriginal teachers are able to win their approval as excellent teachers.

——— was actually my first real placement and starting off being a new teacher, and having the first parent teacher night was, when they found out that I was native, my last name doesn't sound native, it's not native,... as soon as they saw me, I remember one parent pulled her child out from my classroom and moved her into the next room. The principal said "what do you feel about that?" And I said "it has nothing to do with the way I teach, it has to do with the fact that I'm brown". And he felt that too, he said "in order for me to feel better, why don't I just let her take the child out" (VS4.436-464).

I was actually quite reluctant to teach a non-Aboriginal student because I was scared the parents would come in and ... again, I have to prove myself, ... but actually I did okay. I mean I did pretty good (RB4.812-818).

I think it was the mother, when she brought that cake in that very first time and saw me as a native teacher I think it freaked her out. ... A simple little thing went too far. So I think it was much more than just being mad at a teacher who didn't discipline the correct way. I really felt there was a lot of racism there too (VS4.1541-1556).

I was really upset about four or five years ago at that Christian mom who went to the board office and said that native people didn't have a god. She wrote in this letter to the Public School Board, they shouldn't be teaching native awareness because natives don't have [a god], it was a real ugly letter anyway, and... she sent the letter system wide to all the schools. So when it came to our school, we were all suppose to discuss this thing that came. It was about a parent not wanting us to teach Native Studies because natives don't have god and she was a Christian mom I think, it sounded Christian to me anyway. ... The board office said that paper is not being sent to all the schools, and it will not be discussed. — ——refused to listen to what the board said, he just didn't listen (VS4.1723-1767).

I found out she was just a very lonely person and wasn't really attacking me but it was wanting the attention through the attack. So then I learned to just like a little girl, let her be who she was and she left me alone once I stopped fighting with her and agreeing with her even though I disagreed. [I learned] not to get on the defensive and fight about it, I'm learning to step back. Even if it's a wrong position, I'm learning to, ... turn around some ways [of thinking] so that they can look at your culture in a different way. I think it kind of works, it works for me anyway. I think that's why I get along there, I learned to do that (VS4.1906-1954).

What I like about being in the ———— School, is that parents know that I've gotten all these kids, the older kids have come through my classroom and the younger ones are coming through, they know that they've got a good education, they know that they learn a lot of things, and so they are anxious to have their child put in my classroom. They get upset if their kids gets sent to another room, where before they were so anxious to get past my room. I'm not putting my kid in that classroom. Now they want them to come into my classroom it's because I [have] proved myself. I worked hard at it. I had to work harder I think than most teachers would have to because of my colour. So now I am confident. I can do anything I can in the system, that I want to do (VS4.1971-2000).

Teachers experience a conflict between being Aboriginal and being a member of the teaching profession. Sometimes they may be accused of trying to stay away from their Aboriginal communities when their interests and/or work require them to do other things.

They'll have comments like "hey you don't show up any more and you're not there any more, is it because you're teaching" and I'll say "no it's just my kids are growing up", ... it's just you can't always live the same lifestyle [as you did] ten years ago or five years ago, ... you'll have the odd person questioning "is it because you're a teacher" and I say this is the group that I had when I was at this job, this is the group I had 15 years ago, this is the group I have now. Like I cannot be ignoring my peers and colleagues and many times I [have been] accused, "well you're hanging out with the white crowd" (RB4.399-418).

They expect you to be the role model, you know they want you to do this or they don't want you to do that. Like you're not suppose to do that, you're a teacher. so they have very high ideals, high ideals or standards. ... High standards, yes. Like if you wear blue jeans to work, like here, how come you're wearing blue jeans, you're not suppose to do that, you know (RB/VS3.725-738)?

A lot of times [if] the kids see [that] we went out on a weekend if there was a dance, [and] we'd gone to the dance and we might go to a party after at someone's house, and the kids are there, "oh, you drink?" "Teacher, you're drinking!" "Teacher, you smoke!", and it's almost like "Oh no, you smoke", and then sometimes I feel like well should I be here? Maybe I shouldn't be here, and yet they see their parents doing it (VS5.1286-1299).

Aboriginal Teachers' Relationships with Administrators

Administrators can play a pivotal role in the adjustment to school culture and the educational system as a whole. They can be supportive and welcoming or they can undermine or overburden Aboriginal teachers.

What is needed

I like a principal who gives you ideas, like if have a student that just doesn't want to do any work or a student that is constantly bothering the other kids the principal would be there to give you ideas or offer to have a talk with him. Someone who is supportive, who if you go to him and say this parent is giving me a rough time, can you talk to them for me and the principal will instead of not bothering doing it. Or someone who says, "why are they mad at you"? And not helping you out. A friendly one who is always nice to have instead of someone that always looks so grouchy you don't want to go into his office (VS5.843-869).

[I] appreciate an administrator who is an instructional expert, ... very encouraging and warm, and are willing to come in and talk to you frankly about things as opposed to not telling you anything and keeping you in the dark. An example would be a parent would phone and question something, a good administrator or an administrator that handled it effectively would come and talk to me about it and together we would try and solve the problem. Good administrators are administrators that know you as a person as well. [Those that are not helpful] favour certain people, ... [and] talk degradingly of certain groups of people. ... Most of my experiences have been quite favourable with principals, they have been very interesting, they've been very up on things, they're aware (VS3.1483-1554).

Examples of supportive administrators

think I'm lucky, ... my principal, ... ask[s] me how are things going and, ...what would [I] like to see changed within our school system? And I'd say "well it would be really nice to be accepted at the dinner table with everybody else." And after all those years, it's funny how children or your students are so much more accepting of you than adults (RT.1757-1767).

He was very good, very protective with his staff, anything that would go wrong with me he would help out a great deal. The following year we got a woman vice principal and ——-—and he was on the multi-cultural council. He was very down to earth and he didn't mingle with the cliquey groups. He would go for coffee with us two native teachers, so it really made me feel good that he was able to say "come on you guys, we're going out for coffee" or he would come for lunch with us (VS4.641-670).

He was about the only one I knew [who would tell us] be cautious about saying this or don't do this, or telling you little bits about what goes on. ... Coaching here and there once in awhile about how things worked in the system. But being the principal, there are certain things you just don't talk about. You know, with the staff. So you have to find that out yourself (VS4.681-697).

I just sort of stayed to myself, because I was a long [way] from the staff room, I would come down just to have the odd coffee and to sort of mingle, to let people know that I was alive and at that school, but that's about it. I didn't really hang out there. ... I would show up once in awhile. I remember the principal telling me, you've got to come down more often and my excuse was that it was too far to walk, by the time I get down for coffee, the coffee time is over, like it was just a big joke between me and the principal. He knew why I wasn't [coming down but] he tried to encourage me to go down and have coffee (VS4.582-605).

He really helped me through that very difficult situation because that went on for a whole month. It didn't just stop at day one, day two, it went on for the whole month. I was on pins and needles for that whole month because I wasn't sure how involved the superintendent was. I wasn't sure how involved I was with the board, you know how caught up. And so [principal] called me into the office and he told me "oh don't worry about, they're not even mad at you anymore, they're mad at me" (VS4.1560-1590).

There were some people that have a problem with this being just native culture and you know the principal really took a stand and he said, "you know this money that we are applying for is to implement native culture, so that is what we're going to do." He made it very clear that there's nothing wrong with creating things and really celebrating Aboriginal culture (MB3.2287-2302).

The second principal I had was so good with the staff, ... [she had] a lot of confidence in a person that you could succeed, you're doing a good job, ... she just had a certain way of managing the whole staff and very cheerful disposition and a very hard worker, ... [And then there was another principal] He was the same kind of person, very positive kind of person and really believed in you that you could do a good job and you were doing a good job and these are the kinds of things that you are doing right, [he] didn't seem to separate you from anybody or [make] you be an authority for Cree issues and if he did, it was said in such a way that you didn't mind, like in a kind way (MB5.1156-1195).

Non-supportive administrators

Some administrators were very supportive, others were not. One day I decided to test the reaction of one administrator and I just said, "I'm thinking of applying for the vice-principalship, can you tell me how I go about that?" And he almost choked and it had started out just as a joke. I was kind of offended by his reaction so I applied and in our system I've been short-listed, two, three times, but I've never gotten a vice-principalship. I'm not sure why because according to colleagues and principals and people that I've worked with, my skills are much better than some of those who have gotten the position (MB1.716-729).

I had a principal that did not make me feel welcome at all, he never did from day one make me feel welcome. I replaced a man and then the parents were all upset because they took a man out of primary, ... and here I come replacing him. I always seemed to walk into an upsetting situation where it was bad before you even got there. Like it was good, but then I made it bad because I came (VS4.1209-1232).

——— School was very scary for me. At first, I didn't even know where the heck ——— — School was, I never heard of it and they told me it was in the East end, the word ——— scared the heck out of me cause I knew then it was going to be in some classy neighborhood and right away I forgot I was a teacher and just thought of my brown skin. I never thought about whether I [felt] like being a native teacher out there, I didn't know how I was going to fit in. [I expected] it was going to be hard for me to go there. I was very scared but I had to go. So I went and that was a really trying time for me there because ——— one of the principals from the old boys school he has to have it go his way or no way. So when I got there, when he found out I was native, he was very upset. I remember going over to the secretary and I was going to ask to use the phone and then I heard him talking really loud from his office saying "I would like to know who ——— she 's at my school and I want to know something about her." [I thought] what are they going to say about me at the board office? I started panicking, [thinking] what have I ever done for anybody? Am I important enough here or is he going to get rid of me. I thought [about my other experience of being moved] I can't be that important if they just throw me out the door. ... So I started getting a

little bit nervous and he was talking in such a loud gruff voice, so he scared me a little bit. And then I had the roughest class given to me. The kids that nobody else wants (VS4.992-1051).

Stress of proving oneself and being accepted

Once he found out that I was doing what any other teachers would do, he was okay (VS4.1607-1609).

The stressful stuff [was] that I always had to [be] kind of a little bit better than other teachers in order to get his approval (MB5.1440-1444).

I wasn't happy when I found out [how] I was moved out. It was like I wasn't worth anything, just get rid of her, bring somebody else in, I felt a little hurt (VS4.869-873).

I think they were really worried that there was going to be a Indian take over of the school (MB3.2315-2317).

Perceptions of the Educational System, Schools and Curriculum Content

Teachers perceive racism as the most significant factor in publicly funded schools for them and for Aboriginal peoples in general. This has been understood in many different contexts in which any characteristic, real or imagined, is assigned negative values, generalized to the larger populations, and for which Aboriginal people are then justifiably labeled, diminished, dismissed, or mistreated.

Racism must be acknowledged

Well I really, think that we need to deal with racism. Because what I really feel is that there's a lot of racism. Maybe in terms of prejudices or stereotypes, discrimination because you're different looking than another person. I really think that we need to have a lot of anti-racist education being brought forward to these young teachers to people professionally developing in the school systems and beyond. Because it's so thick out there and so thick that it's subtle. It's not even blatant anymore. It's become part of their subtleness (RB/MB1. 2734-2752).

I think they need strategies for dealing with racism. That has to be part of their education. I think they need to build skills for building good relationships (MB1.1181-1184)

I think there has to be some form of consequence for racist actions. ... I really think that they should be brought forward and talked about and solved because if you let it go or if you just mention it to the person, I don't think there's that much affect and so I think principals or vice-principals and staff members and everybody have to take it upon themselves to say hey that's not right and this is why it's not right ... this is not appropriate (VS3.2084-2103).

I know that racism does exist and this is good to see that we're doing something like this because I know now that I'm not the only one who feels that we need to do more, ... we need the resources, where do we get the resources to teach at the grade one level or at a grade ten level (ST.979-987).

We need to seriously take a look at racism and addressing it in our schools (ST.2036-2038).

The teachers, the administrators, the directors, racism, what's racism? We don't have any racism in our school. Of course we have racism in our school! But what needs to be done? What can you do? (RT.1460-1467).

More Aboriginal teachers are needed

I think the support that I would need, would be

more of a human support, like in terms of people, like bodies, actual bodies, ... people that are willing and have the courage to change things, to allow things to change (VS2.2687-2702).

We need more teachers in the Maths, the Sciences, in the technology areas, especially at the high school level... Because that's where we're losing them, we're losing our Aboriginal kids at the secondary level - at high school and if there are more Aboriginal teachers in the high school, maybe the kids will stay a little bit longer. Maybe they'll stay at least until grade 12. (VS2.1696-1723).

So I think it is important that there are more visibly Aboriginal teachers at the high school because it makes a difference (VS2.1796-1803).

I think it's really important to have Aboriginal teachers in all schools. I don't think they should be just in inner city schools (VS3.2366-2392).

We don't have high school, Aboriginal high school teachers. And there is a need for that. (MB4.1295-1301).

I think its important that [we have] more Aboriginal teachers, a greater amount in fact (ST. 3559-3560).

I see a lot of really talented, wonderful, Indian and Metis people that are being overlooked for positions. And then sometimes when they are selected, they're selected because they're status quo in their orientation. They're not interested in you know, bringing about change or they're somehow perceived as people who won't challenge the status quo, you know so there's a sort of silencing that goes on in terms of who is picked for what position. And if it's somebody that has you know that's fairly forthright and outspoken it's not too often those people are the ones that are selected for positions (RT.1280-1300).

Support network is required for Aboriginal teachers

We need an Aboriginal teachers association, ... with just Aboriginal teachers. Give us a chance to get together and maybe compare notes and help each other and things like that. ... I'd like to see some more native teachers as well (RB4.1261-1276).

Create a mentorship program for Aboriginal teachers who are new to the system (ST. 3329).

I think its important that we have more opportunities to get together like, ... there should be more opportunity for Aboriginal teachers to get together and talk about their concerns and how they are going to approach [the issues] (ST.2124-2132).

I think that we as Aboriginal teachers have to strive to provide our support networks within the educational system within our school boards, within our school system, within our province (RT.1696-1703).

I think we need some kind of a network system where we can keep supporting ourselves within the structure (RT.1729-1731).

Teachers perceive that equity and equality issues in schools are misunderstood. Equity is often translated into issues of pride not power, resulting in the resistance to substantial systemic change and positions Aboriginal content as "additive".

Systematic Change

They're [is] still a lot of lethargy when it comes to bringing about institutional change. And I mean if you think about having supportive administration and having people who are going to embrace change and actually initiate it and bring it on, and are knowledgeable about what the issues are, you'll find there's a real lack of awareness, a real huge lack of

awareness ... They're [is] still, I see an awful lot of window dressing going on (RT.1256-1303).

Everything is given lip service (VS7).

You work, you work, you work and I don't see change happening and I guess I'm at the stage where I feel like I'm giving up, just give me my job, let me teach and let me do what I'm good at and let me stay there, you know (RB4935-934).

We're putting documents out because paper speaks ... I don't think that emphasis that they put on this has really changed teacher's attitudes about doing anything at all. Cause we're in a system that is kind of sick right now, in that we don't have any young people coming into the system (VS3.2317-2322).

Well its because some of these people that are doing this, I've been in the school you know, they are almost due for retirement and I guess they don't want to ruffle feathers. I don't know, it just burns me (MB6.803-808).

We're also giving our attitudes to all the children. So if a teacher has an Aboriginal teachers, the chil up as well. ... And whoever h well that's the attitude that (MB1.1379-1385).

I said how come it's only don't have to face this issue, that's a holy day for them is al holiday. So they never issues of having to take a day off work when you're not paid in order to practise your religion (MB3.2523-2531).

I remember our one principal making an attempt to be inclusive and he was leading everybody in the Lord's Prayer but he said "you can say your own prayer." But how can you say your own prayer when you're being drowned out by the Lord's Prayer (RT.2180-2188)?

Content

Very little Aboriginal content with the exception of Native Studies, is being integrated into the curriculum whether it is in K-12 system or the post-secondary system or add-on content.

Acknowledge magnitude of problems and resistance

Literacy is not neutral and the cultural environments in which we are teaching in are not neutral. But they are very much culturally grounded environments ...[in] the community who from which that culture is being transmitted [which] sees that any introduction of another culture is a rejection of their own and thus a resistance to Aboriginal culture or anybody else's culture that is being introduced into the school (RT.3434-3444).

Need for clarification about terminology and goals

... I've heard in the last few years education and Aboriginal people [reffered to in] different terms and sometimes that confuses people still, ... what does it actually mean? I've heard education for Aboriginal people and education by Aboriginal people, I've heard of Aboriginal education in terms of world view. [That is] an issue that has to be [addressed by] the department , ... because in a lot of these programs, ... education equity would be one where is it education by Aboriginal people or [is it] for Aboriginal people? Just because they're Aboriginal doesn't mean they live in the culture and if they don't, what does that mean and if they do, what does that mean? I think that's something that has different meanings for everyone, you know for a lot of people. That's an issue that has to be resolved (RT.3447-3469).

Schools want to do more but they don't know how. They want to do education equity, but their idea, I believe, of education equity is the actual activities, like the craft making of such

things as Dream Catchers, beading, things like that. I think their mind set is that's what Aboriginal culture is - the craft stuff. And now that I'm in a position where I can say no, no, no, that's not all that we're about, we don't only sit back in our teepees and bead forever, there's only so much beading we can do. So now I feel as though I'm in a position where yes I can make a change. If I can enlighten one or two minds, then that's what I intend to do (VS2.623-643).

In the last decade or so, we have had dancers and artists come into the classroom, ... ensuring implementation of Indian and Metis [content], which has been wonderful, but it can also be looked at as a band-aid approach, [people] can say we have done our Indian thing we shouldn't have to do any more, there are other children here (ST. 2920-2929).

Integration or Additive Aboriginal content

We're supplementing the main portion of the curriculum and to me or to the staff members that I work with they say oh well this is just something that we could do if we wanted to do it, right? Or if we were interested in doing it and it gets put into our resource centre and it stays there, it'll rot for the next how every many years. And so that in itself isn't really change. So I think what we need to do is have, if we're really going to change something, like social change we need to have it sort of integrated into our curriculum and brought forth as part of that whole subject, not as a supplement to or an addition to (RT.3015-3030).

A lot of it is, you know oh let's give a little content, but we won't give anything substantial to Aboriginal Education. Instead of counting sticks, we'll count buffalo and we'll call that Aboriginal Education (MB1.803-807).

I think that it's important that we don't make an issue of it, this week is going to be Metis week and you' re going to have to be nice to Metis for this week and the rest of the year you're not. Or this week is Indian week and we' re going to learn about teepees and the rest of the year you are not. I think that's kind of phoney. I think it should be an everyday thing (VS6.1294-1303).

I think in order to have a positive effect on things in order for change to happen, I don't think it can be done in isolation. And I think it needs to be integrated. I don't think we need to teach units on Aboriginal people in isolation. I think it should be integrated into everything that we do. We should be integrating it into Math, we should be integrating it into all of our literature, so that there's a constant smattering so it's not viewed as different. It's part of our culture and we have to be aware that it's part of that (VS3.1598-1615).

Well the whole area of Indian/Metis content and Indian/Metis staff development, I still look upon that as being of great importance. Because not enough people are aware, even Aboriginal people. Because perhaps not enough information is going out of the schools (MB4.1630-1638).

On a bigger scale, I think being part of the Sask. Ed. committee, IMEAC Committee, I'd like to see a Native Studies, 10, 11 or 12 compulsory. One of one class, just one class compulsory for all students. You know like I mentioned at the last meeting I think when you were there and I think it's so important. You know there's going to be so many people in Saskatchewan are going to be dealing with First Nations and Metis kids sometime in their life and often they're dealing from point of ignorance, or lack of knowledge basically and if they could just get a little bit of information it might help (RB4.826-851).

Adequate resources for curriculum development

I don't really know that much about how the money comes down, but I think there needs to

be more funding specifically geared to purchasing, schools purchasing materials, books, hiring somebody if need be, who can help them integrate at the local level because people just aren't, I mean I am Metis and I don't feel that I integrate as much as I should. And yet I know the culture, I know more about it, I am more open to it. How about the non-native teacher? Who is going to help them to set up a plan? They feel ignorant as far as how to do it (MB3.2653-2669)?

The need for more curriculum development around Aboriginal content, I see that as very important and necessary (ST.2019-2021).

How do you incorporate Indian and Metis content into the English Language Arts at a grade 6 level? You know really concrete, specific subject areas, grade levels, this is what you need to do, this is how it fits into a thematic unit (RT.3682-3791).

Inservice is still required

I've had a lot of non-Aboriginal teachers say to me, "I want to use native content in my lesson plans, but how do I go about doing that" (ST. 2964-2967)?

I really think all teachers or anybody that works with people in general should have Native Studies classes so they learn to respect people (ST. 3015-3018).

What is appropriate Native Studies content and who can teach it?

I certainly believe [spirituality] is of great importance, but perhaps not in the context that other people might view, ... it has raised friction among Aboriginal people in the north, they are saying that Indian spirituality in that context is not part of my background (ST. 2520-2534).

Native Studies does not represent the experience of Aboriginal people that it often times is taught by non-natives in the college and university with totally different perspective than that which is you know Aboriginal peoples perspective and so, who's going to teach Native Studies? Where are we going to get the information about what is Native Studies that is appropriate and represented accurately (RT.3385-3395).

Aboriginal language teaching must be addressed

If a person has their language it seems to be assumed that they are going to be able to teach it (ST.2296-2299).

She was fluent in Cree, but that doesn't mean you can teach a language, but that's the perception (MB5.2145-2148).

This one teacher is expected to teach grades 1-12 Cree, ... and the expectations to teach with no materials or curriculums like they have in other subject areas, ... the materials and funds are limited (MB5.1525-1536).

They don't get the training that they need to a language teacher through the regular B.Ed. program, they don't, they need a lot more in the area of language teaching (MB5.2053-2058).

VI. Saskatchewan Educational Policy Affecting Aboriginal Education

The purpose of this review of Aboriginal education policy is to provide readers with an awareness of the changes and conditions which have affected and continue to affect the lives of Aboriginal people in this province. More specifically, it seeks to profile the main public educational policy responses to these conditions. The need for this review became evident to us as we reflected on what we had heard from Aboriginal teachers that we surveyed and interviewed. While Aboriginal teachers felt that they were making a contribution to change that benefits their students and their communities, their relationships are sometimes strained. The expectations of Aboriginal teachers from within the system and their communities are immense, and at times overwhelming. To understand their situation and the environment, in which they carry out their role as teachers, it is important to review some history and the key initiatives and policy developments which drive these expectations. The recommendations we heard from Aboriginal teachers and those we make as researchers can also be better understood in this wider institutional and social context.

It is not possible in this report to detail the full story of Aboriginal people's education, for that has been done elsewhere (RCAP, 1996); only the key events and initiatives in Saskatchewan that have created the current context of education for Aboriginal peoples in the publicly funded schools are explored. While treaties have defined the relationship for First Nations, the specific relationship with the Metis regarding educational policies and decision-making is sometimes unclear and needs further exploration, clarification, and attention in the future.

The experience of Aboriginal people in Canada has been one characterized by marginalization. Their experiences have been objectified and ignored or reduced to their difference without history and context. Treated as a category without personal qualities, Aboriginal people have endured an alienated and subordinate status in social science literature, where they are interpreted by quasi-experts who consider their technical knowledge sufficient to interpret difference without recognizing how they create that difference. This historical alienation of Aboriginal people from themselves and their history presents a distinct challenge for us as researchers. We must find a means through our own scientific research to disentangle ourselves from the biases of past research and find new methods and analysis that will enable us to change old ways of thinking by breaking the silence about the current conditions facing Aboriginal people, and in this case Aboriginal teachers. As Aboriginal educators, we seek to avoid "faulty generalizations" (Minnich, 1990) of Aboriginal teachers by not illustrating their situation in isolation from the context in which they carry out their role as teachers in their classroom, in their schools and within the province.

As early as 1871, Treaty First Nations entered into a relationship with the federal government to have schooling provided to their children. Treaty 1 provided, "Her Majesty agrees to maintain a school on each reserve hereby made whenever the Indians of the reserve should desire it" (Henderson, 1995). Thereafter, each of the Treaty First Nations in Saskatchewan included provisions for schooling of their people in their negotiations. Schooling was intended to help them to make the transitions to a new economy, no longer linked to the buffalo, to which the Treaty Nations agreed. They did not agree, however, to the other purposes for which education would be used. The federal government began to use schooling as a means of achieving their objectives for assimilation and in doing so became paternalistic and

punitive. That the historical context of schooling for Indigenous people in Canada has been one of assimilation for the purposes of indoctrinating a Christian and European world view is undisputed. Less well understood are the foundations of racism and oppression that surround that Eurocentric foundation and their persistence in policy, practice and perceptions of educators in current Saskatchewan schools.

As the federal government's attempts to eradicate Aboriginal peoples by relocation, disease, or starvation failed, the federal government enlisted churches and schools to pursue their objectives of eliminating the 'Indian problem'. Federal day and residential schools administered by clergy would be the primary means of achieving these goals; an approach later pursued through their 'joint' partnerships with the provincial government. In the 1950's, the federal government arranged for children of Treaty First Nations to attend provincial publicly funded schools and funded their education using treaty funds taken from the sale of their lands (Henderson, 1995). Since the federal responsibility extended only over reserve lands, the government could not extract funds for Metis or non-status Indians.

In 1938, a study of children not in schools established for the Provincial Education Minister that an estimated 2500 Metis children Saskatchewan among 6000 Metis living in the north were without schools in their area. While the report confirmed that Metis parents wanted schooling, they had neither facilities nor means for acquiring resources for one. They had no incomes, no tax revenues, nor the support from anywhere else to provide education. Many families lived 4 to 5 miles from school because their life depended on hunting and family-based economies (Littlejohn, 1975). Until 1944, the provincial government denied schooling to the Metis and non-Status Indians in Saskatchewan. Eventually the Saskatchewan's Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) government would implement a policy of providing education, though still on the assimilative model, for all children, including those Metis and non-status Indians living in the north. After 1944, Metis and non-Status Indians attended, albeit inconsistently, exclusively provincial and territorial schools that often had a religious emphasis (Littlejohn, 1983). Education, whether in the north or on reserves, did little to affect the overall economic livelihood of Indigenous communities, as it did little to provide for the unique linguistic and cultural needs of their population or change the subsistence economy on which their survival was based. Given these dismal conditions, many Aboriginal people eventually migrated to urban areas to seek a better education and/or better employment opportunities (Baille, 1994).

The growing population of Indian, Metis and non-Status Indians in urban areas within Saskatchewan altered educational policy in Saskatchewan significantly in the 1970's, for it brought attention to the social, economic, and political conditions facing Aboriginal people. In this same period, the Federal government recognized attempts at education and assimilation had failed and decided in their White Paper policy to terminate their responsibilities for the education of Status Indians by turning education over to the provincial government. Aboriginal people's vehement response across Canada was in their own request for a policy of *Indian Control of Indian Education*, a policy that the Federal government adopted in 1972. Since then, many First Nations communities have assumed control over the administration of First Nations schools, although curriculum and texts have remained outside of the control of Aboriginal people. While the policy of *Indian Control of Indian Education* at the Federal level was intended primarily for on-reserve schooling, it has provided significant impetus for future directions and policy within Saskatchewan education and elsewhere.

Among other improvements in education, *Indian Control of Indian Education* (1972) called for the training of Aboriginal teachers to improve the quality of education for Aboriginal children and to bridge the gap between schools and the Aboriginal communities. In an effort to respond to the severe underepresentation of Aboriginal people in the teaching profession, various organizations have supported Aboriginal Teacher Education Programs (TEPs). These TEPs have been developed with a common mission of training Aboriginal people to enter the teaching profession, but each is different in its constituencies, sponsorship, and program design (NORTEP, 1987). In 1973, the Indian Teacher

Education Program (ITEP) came into existence at the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, the second such program in Canada. This TEP was jointly planned by the Indian Cultural College of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians, the provincial Board of Teacher Education, the Saskatchewan Department of Education, the Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, and the Federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Beginning as a two-year standard "A" teaching certificate program, over twenty-five years, it has developed into a four-year Bachelor of Education program with over 600 graduates.

Another major provincial government report in 1978, the *Svenson Report*, which was instrumental in moving forward the agenda of both First Nations and Metis people would lead to significant developments in the area of education. The report reinforced the need to pay attention to the issues raised by leaders of both First Nations and Metis organizations, as they predicted that the Aboriginal student population in Saskatchewan would be 50 percent of the overall population by 2001 (Svenson Report, 1978). In 1979, the Policy Planning and Special Projects Division (of Saskatchewan), a special branch within the provincial government, was created to bring to fruition calls from the Metis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan for major initiatives. As a result, Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research came into existence. Included in the financing was the support of an urban-based teacher education program, the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP). SUNTEP had two purposes: to ensure that people of Aboriginal ancestry were represented in the teaching profession and, second, and to provide positive role models sensitive to the needs of Aboriginal students. Similarly, the NORTEP Council, an elected body of northern representatives, to prepare teachers for Northern Saskatchewan, established the Northern Teacher Education Program (NORTEP) in 1977 in the north. The primary purpose of NORTEP was to influence positively northern education through the provision of an off-campus, field-based, Aboriginal-oriented university teacher-training program for Indian and Metis people. The second purpose was to contribute to northern social and economic development (Carnegie, 1991). It was expected that the TEPs would provide educational opportunities that would enhance economic participation of Aboriginal people, provide Aboriginal role models for students, and influence the educational system as a whole. A tangible result has been the increased representation of Aboriginal teachers in the province.

Another layer of programming was developed in 1962 at the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, and influenced by CCF government initiative: in the Indian and Northern Education Program (INEP). INEP is an undergraduate area of specialization as well as a postgraduate degree program that offers a specialization in Aboriginal education, and generates research and analysis through its graduate program and Aboriginal faculty. INEP also offers TEP graduates and mainstream teachers an avenue for developing areas of specialization in Aboriginal epistemology, pedagogy, culture and race politics in education, and cross-cultural research. While its initial intentions were to prepare non-Aboriginal teachers for Northern communities, it has since been expanded to provide educators with an awareness of the conditions and politics of transformation or decolonization of Aboriginal education at both the public school and First Nations community levels. In 1993, undergraduate degree students preparing for teacher certification were required to have a First Nation and Cross Cultural Education course to their programs, and in 1999 the College of Education will add Native Studies to the requirements. Students enrolled in the College of Education will have to meet a prerequisite requirement of Native Studies to the post-academic program.

Policy development in the broader arena of education in this province provides yet another context for the examination of Aboriginal teachers' experience in Saskatchewan. In 1981, the Minister of Education mandated a Curriculum and Instruction Review Committee to undertake a major review of the K-12 system. The result was a blueprint titled *Directions* (Sask. Ed, 1984), outlining the goals for education and a plan for *Core Curriculum* (Sask. Ed, 1984). Saskatchewan's *Core Curriculum* was to provide all Saskatchewan students with an education that would

serve them well, regardless of the choices they made upon leaving school. The two major components of *Core Curriculum* are the *Common Essential Learnings* and the *Required Areas of Study*. The seven required areas of study are English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, health education, physical education and arts education. Six categories of common essential learnings are incorporated throughout the courses of study. They include communication, numeracy, critical and creative thinking, technological literacy, personal and social skills, and independent thinking. To address the needs of students and the interests of varying communities, Saskatchewan Education created a provision for *Locally Determined Options* allowing for the development of curriculum at the local level. In addition to recognizing the diverse needs of students, Saskatchewan Education provided for an *Adaptive Dimension in Core Curriculum* (1992) so that teachers could adapt curriculum content, instructional practices and the learning environment to local conditions and populations. In addition to these key components, *Core Curriculum* includes other initiatives to guide the development of curriculum, teaching materials and instructional methods. These initiatives include resource-based learning, Aboriginal education, gender equity, multi-cultural education and integration of students with special needs. The outcome of equity-related initiatives is currently a focus of the discussions of the Equity Education Forum.

Concerned for the absence of Indian and Metis people from their hearings conducted throughout the province, the Curriculum and Instruction Review Committee commissioned a discussion paper to examine the state of education as it affected Aboriginal people (Littlejohn, 1983). Among their other recommendations was the need for greater representation in the review process by Aboriginal educators, women and the disabled. It also recommended that while the Program and Policy Review Committee of Sask Education was to oversee the implementation of Directions, the (then) Native Curriculum Review Committee was to continue to set priorities for Native curriculum development. More specifically, it needed to establish guidelines for curriculum development, to recommend appropriate personnel to guide progress on specific projects, and to construct principles for the development of curriculum and resources. Finally, it recommended that Saskatchewan Education locates, collects, and catalogue resources. Other recommendations in the report included the following:

- That Native Studies be offered as an elective for all secondary students;
- That support be provided for the continued development of Native language curriculum and materials;
- That attention be given to the inclusion in Math and Science of Native content;
- That recognition be given to second language needs of Native students;
- That discrimination, prejudice and race relations not be avoided in the development of curriculum;
- That learning opportunities be provided to all teachers regarding the specific learning challenges faced by students with English as a second language;
- That professional development opportunities be created for all teachers with respect to Native content; and finally
- That the study of cross-cultural education be mandatory for all pre-service teachers.

This initiative provided the basis for the *Five-Year Action Plan for Native Curriculum Development* (Sask Ed, 1984) by the (then) Native Curriculum Review Committee that adopted by Saskatchewan Education as a blueprint for action. The Indian and Metis Education Advisory Committee forwarded a revised plan in 1995 titled *Indian and Metis Action Plan.*

The Indian and Metis Education Advisory Committee, a committee that has undergone many transformations, with representation from Aboriginal education organizations and institutions, with the exception of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, along with representation from teachers, trustees, directors of education and the universities has played a significant leadership role in the developments in Aboriginal education in this province. The Indian and Metis Education Advisory Committee, a body appointed by the Minister of

Education, has set the current priorities, which are centered, on five areas: evaluation, governance, teachers and administrators, curriculum and school-based planning, external relationships and communication. The committee has recommended that first priority for new programs should address Aboriginal identity through an emphasis in Indian languages, Native Studies courses, programs that build student self-esteem, teacher-training, and in-service at all levels. The Indian and Metis Education Advisory Committee also reaffirmed the importance of funding for research on Aboriginal education.

The community schools program is another initiative directed towards students-at-risk in the inner city and whose purpose is to bridge the gap between the culture of the school and the culture of the home. Launched in 1980, its premise is preventive, providing holistic responses to education issues related to urban poverty. A complex dimension of this poverty relates to situations of chronic unemployment, poor education, illness and deep-seated systemic inequity. The program has recently been expanded to other urban centres and northern communities where there are high rates of poverty. Community schools serve a large segment of the population in low economic urban areas where many Aboriginal people have settled. A new policy and conceptual framework entitled *Building Communities of Hope: Best Practices for Meeting the Learning Needs of At Risk and Indian and Metis Students* (Sask Ed, 1997), offers a plan for a specific initiative in northern Saskatchewan. It also provides special funding to assist school divisions and schools in providing educational programs to meet the needs of their communities.

Since the 1980's, the schools and districts have implemented many of the recommendations from the discussion paper prepared for the Curriculum and Instruction Review Committee or are in the process of having them implemented through the directives of the policy adopted by Indian and Metis Education. Saskatchewan Education adopted the *Indian and Metis Education Policy from Kindergarten to Grade 12* (Sask Ed, 1989), including minor revisions made in 1995. Further current revisions are being considered at this time. The policy is guided by the following principles: that opportunity is created for the full participation of Aboriginal people in all aspects of the system; that recognition of differences be reflected in the initiatives (e.g. differences in world view); that cooperation, consultation and coordination be promoted by various levels of government; and that school and community be a focus of the initiatives.

The *Indian and Metis Education Policy from Kindergarten to Grade 12* addresses the involvement of Aboriginal people in both its on-going development and review of policy. It gives recognition to the legal and historical relationships with Aboriginal people and to the unique circumstances facing Northern Saskatchewan. It further amplifies the importance of participation by Aboriginal people in all aspects of the educational system whether systems are co-managed, delivered as alternate programs or delivered through a policy of affirmative action. With respect to curriculum content, the policy advocates inclusion of Indian and Metis perspectives in *Core Curriculum* for all students in the province, including the development of Native Studies and Indian Languages curricula. It calls for the development, identification and distribution of instructional resources and for cooperation and collaboration with Indian and Metis organizations to develop resources to support curriculum. It gives recognition and support for alternative programs and initiatives and, in particular, views cross-cultural education, Native Studies and ESL/D education as integral components of all teacher education programs. It calls further for the support of alternative teacher education programs, teacher in-service to support implementation of the policy and curriculum and public awareness of issues affecting Aboriginal people. The policy promotes research to provide data regarding the status of Aboriginal education. It recommends the monitoring and evaluation of the initiatives in Indian and Metis education, liaison and cooperation among various organizations and Aboriginal institutions, cooperation and collaboration with Tribal Education Authorities and First Nations' Schools, and maintenance of a work unit in the Department of Education with a focus on Indian and Metis education. Finally, it calls for the representation of Indian and Metis people on all appropriate advisory committees and task forces. The High School Review Committee in 1994 made similar and parallel recommendations and was

subsequently adopted by Saskatchewan Education as *Policy Direction for Secondary Education in Saskatchewan* (Sask Ed, 1994).

Throughout this process, Saskatchewan Education has recognized the social and economic challenges that face many Aboriginal families and communities. The response has been an integrated strategy by government, *Children First: An Invitation to Work Together, Creating Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Children* (Government of Saskatchewan, n.d.), involving seven government departments with priorities to strengthen early childhood development, to support at-risk youth, to address child and family poverty, and to provide grants to community organizations for their efforts to integrate services.

About the same time, another important review was conducted by Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission. The review led to the development of the *Education Equity Plan* in 1985. The findings of this review highlighted the crisis of and challenge presented by the education of Aboriginal people. The attrition rate of Aboriginal students was reported at 75%, with 30% of those enrolled performing two to three grades below grade level. *The Education Equity* plan (SHRC, 1985) called for every school board in the province of Saskatchewan whose enrollment of students of Indian ancestry exceeded 5% to apply immediately for approval, pursuant to Section 47 of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, for a plan of action.

Each plan was to include the following components: a statement of the students of Indian ancestry enrolled with the Board of Education, a plan to actively recruit and hire qualified teachers of Indian ancestry, a plan to review its recruiting and hiring practices to ensure there are no barriers to the recruitment and hiring of Aboriginal teachers, a commitment to work closely with its teachers in implementing 'education equity', a plan to provide cross-cultural education on a regular basis for the teachers employed by the school division and a plan to increase and improve the participation of parents of Indian ancestry. In addition, it called for the Department of Education to make the financial resources available to School Boards to implement a plan of education equity, that it implement the Directions report, and the Five Year Action Plan for Native Curriculum Development, that it continue to fund and, where possible, increase its funding to programs established for training qualified teachers of Indian ancestry, and that it develop guidelines and funding for alternate forms of education and programs for students of Indian ancestry. *Education Equity* has thus provided an important vehicle for change in Aboriginal education in this province, particularly for school divisions with high Aboriginal student populations.

The result of the blueprint for *Education Equity* has been a collaborative response by the major stakeholders in education, namely the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, the League of Educational Administrators and Directors of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, the Department of Education and the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission. It provided an opportunity for dialogue, problem- solving, and organizational learning through an inter-organizational forum supported through a committee representing all the organizations between 1986 -1997. The earlier format of an annual inter-organizational forum or meeting included progress reports from school divisions about their efforts to address the issues raised by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission's *Education Equity* plan. This committee was folded into a new structure in 1994, the Equity in Education Forum, consolidating the efforts to address inequity in its various forms within the education system. A joint policy framework and action plan, *Our Children, Our Communities and Our Future* (1997), was adopted to encompass a broad scope of activities to address employment equity, curriculum concerns, instructional and assessment practices, cross-cultural, inter-cultural and anti-racist education, equity in access and benefit, school environment, student development, the school and the community, monitoring, leadership development and organizational change and development. Its intent is to move issues of equity in education at a faster pace by fostering commitment to equity by everyone, implementing a collaborative and community- based process for change, securing resources, nurturing leadership and developing indicators of success. It is hoped that the outcome is the development of equity in education at the school division

level, which will ensure that all children have equal access and benefit to the educational programs offered. The forum has added representation from the universities and Gabriel Dumont Institute. Current work has begun in the development of indicators for success.

Another more recent collaborative response is the *Diversity in the Classroom* series which supports teachers professional growth for achieving equity in the schools. The program was developed jointly by the Saskatchewan Professional Development Unit at the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and by the Saskatchewan Instructional Development and Research Unit of the University of Regina. The series includes attention to Aboriginal education.

The issues affecting Indigenous peoples worldwide are not dissimilar. Delegates attending the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples meeting in Geneva, July 27-31, 1998, stated repeatedly the key issues facing their communities and nation states concerning education. These were the importance of Indigenous languages to knowledge and identity; the link between language, culture and land; the need for a range in governance structures from full control of systems to the need to work with Indigenous peoples within the existing systems; curriculum which respects the history, values, languages and aspirations of Indigenous peoples and the need for adequate resources to accomplish these ends. Other issues which arose were the effects of privatization in education on Indigenous initiatives, the focus on "work" experience, arguments that rationalized the so-called "the best interests of the child", the effects of globalization and working conditions of Indigenous educators.

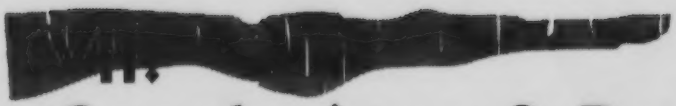
Today, while many First Nations children with status as Indians attend band schools, the majority of Aboriginal children in Saskatchewan attend provincial schools which is the contextual focus of this study. According to the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Report* (1996), 68% of Aboriginal children across Canada attend provincial schools. Overall, however, Aboriginal people continue to lack representation on school boards. There are only a few Aboriginal people in positions of added responsibility as superintendents, principals or vice-principals. While there has been an emphasis on policy for First Nations, Metis and Inuit cultures, languages (in some cases) and histories in the curriculum, the implementation of a policy for integrating Indigenous knowledge and perspectives throughout the curricula for all students has been minimal (Saskatchewan Education Indicators Report, 1998).

Depending on perspective, the colonial history and experience of Indigenous people can be characterized as a sad story of marginalization and assimilation within a wider global history of racism and/or a valiant story of resistance and negation. Nonetheless, the outcome for Indigenous people has been an indelible loss of land, economy and place. *The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Report* (1996) has concluded that schooling continues to be an alienating experience for Aboriginal students and that the gap has not been closed between the educational achievement of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians. It recognized the need to restore full control of Aboriginal education to Aboriginal peoples; the need to establish mechanisms that make the systems accountable whether they are Aboriginal, provincial or territorial; and the need for a curriculum which transmits history, culture, and languages of Aboriginal peoples and adequate financial resources to make this happen. Change, the report urged, could only be effected when a new relationship had been developed between Aboriginal people and governments, among Aboriginal people themselves, and between Aboriginal people and corporate entities which recognizes Aboriginal people's self-governance and authority in education and in other matters that affect them.

Closer to home, a new report commissioned by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, *Saskatchewan and Aboriginal People in the 21st Century: Social, Economic and Political Changes and Challenges* (FSIN, 1997), reinforces the findings of previous reports on the challenges and opportunities presented by the changing demographics in the province of Saskatchewan. The report predicts that by the year 2011, 38% of the population will be Aboriginal between the ages of 0-24. Similarly over the next two decades, the Aboriginal population in the 25- 34-year age group is also projected to increase by

38%. According to the report, the "bulge" for treaty on-reserve Indians is age four, whereas the "bulge" for non-Indians is age 65. By 2001 about one quarter of the labor force entrants and about one third of all new school entrants will be Aboriginal. The report is more optimistic than previous reports, suggesting that the reality of self- government is underway. Partnership and cooperation and co-management are the operative terms for creating advantage for the province and the Aboriginal communities. The report charges that change is happening and leadership is challenged at all levels to shape it or watch it happen.

The pressure to create change is undeniable. The needs are immense and the solutions needed are intertwined spheres that include the political, the social, the economic and the cultural dimensions of community life. This environment creates tremendous pressure on resources, particularly human resources. It demands expertise on the dynamics of racism, the effects of colonization, and the vision to transcend this experience so all may benefit.



Conclusions & Recommendations

Various strategies have emerged to address diversity and promote equity in Saskatchewan, particularly within schools and universities. Some of these initiatives are efforts to correct past mistakes; others have been in response to Provincial, Federal or Human Rights legislation. Other initiatives derive from a growing awareness of the effects of globalization, including an increasing appreciation that Aboriginal issues are going to be, if they are not already, issues of concern for **all** people in Saskatchewan and Canada.

Saskatchewan's policy response to educational equity, particularly to issues concerning Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan, has been impressive and sometimes bold. The result has been: a substantive change in the number of Aboriginal people entering the teaching profession; a curriculum framework for all students which provides recognition and integration of Aboriginal knowledge, history and perspectives; programs of study in education at the universities which includes a prerequisite in Native Studies and a compulsory requirement in cross-cultural studies at the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, and a compulsory requirement in cross-cultural studies in the elementary program in the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina; additional financial support to Community Schools where poverty is a factor and where there is a high Aboriginal student population; a plan to achieve education equity in schools with 5% Aboriginal student populations; financial funding to schools to support stay-in-school initiatives; a plan for the integration of services to enhance the chances of students who are considered at-risk in succeeding at school; and, finally, a professional development strategy promoting equity developed jointly by the Saskatchewan Professional Development Unit at Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and Saskatchewan Instructional Development and Research Unit at the University of Regina.

However, the change envisioned by these many initiatives has been slow and sometimes meets with resistance. As the *Saskatchewan Indicators* (1998) Report affirms, and the *Priorities in Indian and Metis Education* (Sask. Ed, 1997) suggests, some areas of the public educational infrastructure have not been affected by the above policies, specifically areas such as governance and leadership development, and support for Aboriginal language development. In addition, adequate support and concerted action necessary for on-going professional growth and the change envisioned by the policies and initiatives are sparse and sometimes absent, reflecting a possible lack of common understanding and sufficient coordination of change initiatives. Any change or integration is possible only if there is shared power and mutual respect among all the stakeholders involved or affected by policy development and implementation. For Aboriginal people long left out of the power loop, this shared responsibility has been unrealized.

Thus far, in the initiatives undertaken in Saskatchewan, the historical foundations and the impact of racism in society and the resulting legacy of an oppressive colonial history have not been sufficiently acknowledged or examined. Aboriginal teachers perceive racism as the most significant factor affecting the educational system. Racism is the silent endemic factor that continues to affect individuals and groups, that strains relationships and limits the possibility for individual and collective action to effect change which will benefit all students. Racism, so long as it goes unacknowledged, will continue to affect policy decisions, practice, and the quality of the relationships in schools, school systems, and the educational system as a whole. Racism affects everyone, and since clearly, racism can no longer be regarded as simply the uninformed attitudes of a few individuals, the systemic support within which racism is produced must come under closer scrutiny (Sleeter, 1993).

As Saskatchewan Education faces the enormous challenges impacting Aboriginal teachers, it is important that it understand those challenges within the context of a legacy of domination and oppression of Aboriginal people. This legacy itself manifests in ongoing myths and stereotypes that serve to construct differences, particularly the negative values that have been associated with those differences. The legacy of colonization has taken an immense toll on all Aboriginal teachers' lives, shaping how they think of themselves and how they see themselves in relation to each other. Nevertheless, as Aboriginal teachers often related, the issues of equity and equality in schools are largely misunderstood. Problems encountered in promoting equity, include resistance by some people, complacency, financial costs of some initiatives, and biases of some people. Equity is often translated into issues of Aboriginal pride, rather than related to the need for substantive change and critique of how inequity is reproduced. The result is the integration of fragmented content, or an overemphasis on the importance of Aboriginal teachers as "role models" which can serve to obscure the impact of systemic inequity (Briskin, 1994). **Hence, we recommend that Saskatchewan develop mechanisms for regular review of how equity initiatives are translated into practice.**

We need to become more critical of our approaches. We need to scrutinize and understand the limits of cultural difference approaches which may inadvertently further stereotype peoples, and recognize that a cultural diversity approach might lead to a superficial reading of difference, making power relations invisible and keeping dominant cultural norms in place (Razack, 1998). Our approaches need to move beyond cultural sensitivity, important as such sensitivity is, in order to continue our efforts to diversify the teaching population, boards of education and that the history of Aboriginal peoples is **the history** of this country. It is important that our approaches to education reflect this shift in perspective. Aboriginal teachers thus far have played an important role in this effort. **We recommend that Saskatchewan Education continue efforts to diversify the teaching population and boards of education.**

Saskatchevan has for the first time a self-identified population of Aboriginal teachers, made possible through a system of voluntary identification recently introduced in the forms teachers complete at the beginning of each school year. This data illustrates that Aboriginal teachers represent 3% of the total teaching population in Saskatchewan. Of 10,134 Saskatchewan teachers in 1996-97, 315 self-declared as having "Aboriginal ancestry." Females represent 65% of that population and males represent 35%. This overall gender representation was matched by the sample of 106 teachers who completed the survey for this study. Of the 106 respondents, 64% were females and 35% were males. The group of teacher respondents represented a diverse group, most of whom had graduated from publicly funded schools and from a university with a professional certificate and bachelor of education degree.

Our survey indicated Aboriginal teachers in publicly funded schools in Saskatchewan have diverse identities, cultural experiences, affiliations, knowledges, and skills that they bring to their professional lives. It was evident that their exposure and socialization within an Aboriginal community ultimately affects their identity, knowledge, and languages spoken. Most teachers surveyed and interviewed grew up in rural and urban communities with varying degrees of ties with other Aboriginal relatives, people or communities. A smaller number of teachers grew up in on a reserve or Metis communities; the majority reside in urban communities where they are teaching.

While many teachers strongly identified as Metis, Cree, Saulteaux, etc., many also shared experiences of shame and denial. Many, if not most, teachers interviewed continue to struggle against the rigid boundaries created by legal and political definitions which do not embrace or explain their experiences, especially among those Aboriginal people who embrace several identities. In addition, their visibility as Aboriginal persons was a common defining experience for Aboriginal teachers, one that had several dimensions to it. Those who "looked Indian" by color have had one type of experience, while those who "did not look Indian" have had another. Those with visible Aboriginal features were treated negatively, while those who did not have these features had to deal with the negative feedback about their ancestry

when peers did not know their ancestry. However, the outcome for both was the same, a sense of persistent alienation, a factor that sometimes affected their relationships with one another in the school.

Aboriginal teachers' own close extended families and communities are their source of inspiration and strength. While many teachers have been inspired by a long and continuing desire to work with children, others were motivated and encouraged to be teachers by their family members. However, poverty and the many challenges presented by the conditions of poverty and racism prevented them from continuing their education until programs like the TEPs provided them another access to education.

Many of the teachers we interviewed have, like their students, lived and continue to live highly stressed personal lives. They are often placed in classrooms and/or schools with students who are at risk or with special needs. The need for strong resilient teachers in these cases places special demands on teachers, many of whom feel compelled to act as supportive advocates for their students. While their work in these school environments is largely rewarding and satisfying, it is also stressful and a source of frustration because of their inability sometimes to affect solutions for many of their students' personal social problems or to participate equitably in the necessary and massive revisions to school policies and practices.

Aboriginal teacher education programs have largely contributed to the increasing availability of Aboriginal teachers in the Saskatchewan publicly funded schools. Among those teachers who completed the survey for this study, 67% had graduated from a TEP, with representations of 37% from SUNTEP, 20% from NORTEP and 11% from ITEP. Almost half of 106 respondents have entered into the teacher-training program as mature students, indicating the importance of maintaining the mature entry in TEP and regular teacher training programs. Our findings suggest that many Aboriginal teachers were not socialized or encouraged to see post-secondary education as an option they might pursue.

The teachers frequently discussed two important features of their TEP experience. One was the critical mass of Aboriginal people in the TEPs that provided a degree of comfort and security to be surrounded by people like themselves. It also provided comfortable and predictable surroundings where they could live, work and socialize together. The second was their new-found awareness of themselves developed through their coursework and associations which were instrumental to their changing and transformed identities.

TEPs are credited as having enriched and transformed their lives because of the attention provided to their histories, cultures, voices, and experiences. As TEP students, they had, as part of their teacher training program, taken at least one Native Studies course and/or Cross-cultural or Indian Education, which enabled them to explore current and historical Aboriginal issues, a knowledge base that only recently has been recognized in the College of Education as a necessary core requirement for mainstream teacher training. This foundation of Native Studies would have an even more important effect on their personal lives and identity, as well as on their professional choices. The experiences gained in the TEPs have had not only a significant impact on the teachers themselves personally, but also in the schools in which they teach.

Aboriginal teachers face multiple and interrelated challenges resulting in much stress. There is a general assumption of the homogeneity of Aboriginal people which is a legacy of racism and colonization. Although Aboriginal teachers recognize that Aboriginal people share similar values, they also understand that Aboriginal people differ in their beliefs and traditions. This understanding of the diversity within and among Aboriginal peoples was not equally shared among most other teachers and administrators and was often a challenge and source of professional frustration for the Aboriginal teachers. Another consequence of this assumption of the homogeneity of Aboriginal people is to stereotype Aboriginal teachers as having similar kinds of knowledge.

Many teachers also felt that stereotyping of Aboriginal people went hand in hand with negative perceptions, such as having low expectations of Aboriginal students and teachers, and assigning neg-

ative caricatures to Aboriginal parents. Teachers also expressed dismay at the high numbers of Aboriginal students being designated to resource and special needs. Despite what may appear as needs, these labels continue to have the effect of perpetuating cycles of low expectations and low-self esteem among these students. In the context of the flux, Aboriginal teachers expressed the residual challenge of feeling that they may be the agents of assimilation when their task appears to be making the students fit the current mainstream system, especially when substantive systemic changes are not forthcoming.

Aboriginal teachers view Aboriginal knowledge as specialized knowledge, which many elders have tried to explain is not merely gleaned from being "Native" or from having an interest in the topic. It is a specialized knowledge that is learned in both formal and informal Aboriginal contexts, some of which may be developed through some courses in Native Studies. However, some elders, including the elders in our talking circles, have questioned whether that is adequate in light of the fact that many teachers are learning about Aboriginal peoples and issues from books and not from elders and in the traditional socialization of their cultures. Another related issue was raised by some Aboriginal teachers who expressed ambivalence at teaching content related to spiritual traditions with which they did not feel comfortable or about which they had little knowledge. In this regard they expressed the need for support and opportunities to seek advice from knowledgeable elders. **We recommend that Saskatchewan Education create partnership with Aboriginal communities and elders to facilitate teachers' access to Indigenous knowledge and skills.**

Aboriginal teachers raised concerns about the knowledge required for teaching Native Studies in the publicly funded schools. In addition, they questioned what aspects of their Aboriginal knowledge can and should be developed in the schools, an issue that is raised in the report of the United Nations' Working Group on Indigenous Populations called *Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Indigenous Heritages*. This reports draws attention, among others, to the need for establishing appropriate cultural protocols with Indigenous peoples to stop any misappropriation of Indigenous knowledge. Teachers will also need opportunities and support to meet the accreditation requirements to teach Native Studies, particularly when Native Studies becomes a compulsory area of study at all levels of schooling, including pre-service teacher education and the K-12 system. Content and approaches to teaching Native Studies should be negotiated with Aboriginal communities and elders. **We recommend that Saskatchewan Education develop a strategy to address the issue of Indigenous knowledge and what constitutes Native Studies.**

Similarly, Aboriginal languages are also viewed by Aboriginal teachers as specialized areas of study for which fluency is not always the best criterion for a teaching assignment. To have a viable language course or program in the publicly funded schools will require that universities and teacher education programs recognize Aboriginal languages as specialized areas of study which includes linguistics, literature, and methodologies. Cree language teachers currently do not feel they receive adequate administrative understanding or support to fulfill an assignment that often lacks curriculum clarity or access to resources.

The majority of teacher respondents (91%) used English as the primary mode of communication in their homes, although 26% also indicated they were speakers of a First Nations language. Cree and Michif speakers predominate in Saskatchewan, although there were also Saulteaux, Dene, and Dakota speakers, but in much smaller numbers, and there are few with multiple language capabilities. We invited teachers to disclose their proficiencies, in the categories of understanding, speaking, reading and writing in First Nations languages. The information revealed an overall low proficiency in areas of reading and writing of Aboriginal languages among First Nations language speakers. Some teachers have attempted to ameliorate these competencies with Cree language courses or with courses to help their second language students. Eighteen per cent of the teachers surveyed indicated they had formal training in Cree and 54% indicated they had training in teaching English as a second language.

The language findings indicate that Aboriginal lan-

guages are rapidly being eroded among First Nations speakers in Saskatchewan, especially among students and teachers in the public and urban schools system. Without Aboriginal languages in the schools, elders have long held that their many diverse Indigenous languages will be lost, along with the knowledge and skills embedded in them. With the present limited pool of Aboriginal language teachers who are fluent in the languages and trained in formal language and methodologies, the decline of Aboriginal languages will be further magnified. Furthermore, there will also be a smaller pool of available Aboriginal language teachers for the publicly funded schools, a case that has been already found in most, if not all, publicly funded schools.

If Cree, Michif and other Aboriginal languages are to be considered viable language options in the schools, **we recommend that Saskatchewan Education provide funding for the research and development of curriculum and resources to enhance the status and effectiveness of programming in these languages. Furthermore, we recommend that University and teacher education programs develop Aboriginal languages as an area of specialization which would include courses in linguistics, literature, and language teaching methodology.**

In many cases, Aboriginal teachers were expected to fulfill the role of both classroom teacher and cultural broker for their group on a full range of issues that arose in schools concerning a diverse Aboriginal student populations, curriculum content, administration and mediation between the school and Aboriginal parents. The immense scope and depth of knowledge that Aboriginal teachers are expected to have is unrealistic. They also expressed a need for recognition for their expertise in education other than "Aboriginal education" which they unilaterally were assumed to have.

All these expectations, coupled with the demand that they assume primary responsibility for equity changes in schools, without the necessary knowledge of all Aboriginal peoples in Saskatchewan, the needed support from elders in the communities, or the resources needed to effectively carry out these multiple responsibilities result in much frustration. In order for schools to respond to the challenges and initiatives undertaken, teachers must be fully involved, supported, and rewarded for their efforts. It cannot be seen as an initiative that just involves Aboriginal teachers as resources for the enriched productivity of a system, but an initiative that challenges everyone to have a role in achieving equity. This imperative will require additional professional growth opportunities that need to be identified and provided to everyone, including Aboriginal teachers.

A concern raised by almost all the teachers interviewed was a perception that the Saskatchewan publicly funded schools lacked commitment to the integration of 'Indian and Metis' content in the curriculum. This problem was identified in the *Saskatchewan Education Indicator's Report* released in April 1998. Where integration of Aboriginal content occurs, it is perceived as 'additive', meaning that some fragmented themes or units have been added to the curriuculum, resulting in its marginalization. In effect, this approach does little to change what is accepted as standard and legitimate knowledge, but continues to privilege what is considered Western or dominant knowledge. Teachers are well aware that the add-and-stir model cannot transform the powers and definitions drawn from old hierarchies of privilege and domination and feel this area has largely been dismissed. **We recommend that Saskatchewan Education through its partnerships continue to support and promote professional growth opportunities in the areas of equity.**

Areas of focus for professional growth may include a renewed consciousness of why Aboriginal initiatives have been put in place; new knowledge bases among Aboriginal peoples, including treaties, history, sciences, cultural and ecological studies, and cultural protocols; new skills that promote inter-cultural communication and that enable students to access the benefits of education, including English as second language, and integration of Aboriginal content, etc. As with any change envisioned in the educational system, the needs of teachers will vary depending on their levels of confidence, experience, and education. The teachers in this study recommended that educational consultants with specialized knowledge in Aboriginal knowledge and communities, history, ethics and protocols, and pedagogies be put in place

to support all teachers in implementing policy to integrate Indigenous knowledge and perspectives. These consultants could be especially supportive to schools in developing programs and policies to address issues arising out of the conditions we described earlier. **We recommend that Saskatchewan Education provide Aboriginal consultants as a means of providing on-going support to school division, schools and teachers in the implementation of the initiatives for Indian and Metis Education in the Core Curriculum.**

Another challenge facing Aboriginal teachers in publicly funded schools is the dismissal of or resistance to Aboriginal content by non-Aboriginal students and/or their parents. Children learn their social attitudes from within their homes and within the larger society. These attitudes have had a significant impact on their relationships with their students. We also heard that Aboriginal parents and communities can test Aboriginal teachers. On one hand, Aboriginal parents often demand that Aboriginal teachers prove themselves as being equally capable as their non-Aboriginal colleagues. On the other hand, Aboriginal parents may have elevated expectations of them, adding further responsibilities to counsel and mediate for them. In addition, their personal and professional choices or busy lives may also bring into question their commitment to their own community when they are not seen within the Aboriginal community. Gaining approval and challenging stereotypical attitudes have come to be common persistent issues for Aboriginal teachers that can be taxing on them. Despite these challenges Aboriginal teachers perceive that they are making a significant contribution to education and feel strengthened and motivated by Aboriginal students' learning and successes, and by supportive administrators and teachers, and appreciative parents and communities.

Aboriginal teachers shared many incidences of strain in staff rooms as they attempted to fulfill the high and sometimes conflicting expectations in the schools and within the communities they teach. Strain is experienced when they are called upon to address various contemporary issues for which there are no easy solutions. They are called upon to be the sounding board for a whole litany of issues dealing with Aboriginal peoples. While they recognize that these actions are often not intended to be offensive, they feel overwhelmed with prevailing negative attitude towards Aboriginal people and students and when they sense avoidance from colleagues. Many Aboriginal teachers have resolved how to deal with these situations, either by not responding to or by staying away from the staff rooms, while others with more teaching experience and familiarity with their colleagues have taken a more determined stance to challenge the negative attitudes. Despite these kinds of experiences Aboriginal teachers expressed a sense of responsibility to be supportive of their colleagues. **Given all the pressures and challenges facing Aboriginal teachers, we recommend that opportunities for networking among Aboriginal teachers and like minds be explored further with school divisions where there are significant numbers of Aboriginal teachers and/or by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation through its structures.**

Given the difficult and complex environment that Aboriginal teachers must negotiate in their professional roles, the responses of principals and vice-principals are pivotal in helping Aboriginal teachers adjust to the school culture and educational system as a whole. They can support or they can undermine or overburden Aboriginal teachers. In the same way colleagues can be inviting, extending a hand of friendship and mentorship or overwhelming because of their expectations and unexamined racist attitudes.

Leadership for change can come from many areas in the school, but if the dominant perspective is that teachers have post-graduate degrees in order to assume leadership positions in schools, then schools will continue not to have Aboriginal educators assuming these positions. With only two out of the 106 respondents reporting a post-graduate degree, not enough Aboriginal teachers are qualified to take on these positions. There is an urgent need for Aboriginal teachers to take part-time or full-time study in master's programs, a project that has been restrained by lack of scholarships, fellowships, and grants to teachers to undertake studies while often carrying responsibilities of family and their financial care. Funds distributed by bands for post-secondary education have often been too low to support the full needs of teachers. In other

cases, there have been no funds for Metis or non-status Aboriginals. **To encourage teachers to assume positions as leaders in schools and school systems, we recommend that financial incentives be provided so they can pursue advanced graduate programs in their areas of interest.**

The findings of this study are consistent with the issues raised in the existing, but limited, literature on Indigenous and minority status teachers' experience. Especially troubling are the high expectations which assume that racial identity alone will make teachers effective, able to solve all the problems, to eradicate racism, and to subvert the interest of their own communities in the process of being participants in a system resistant to change. The political nature of the work is also reinforced by the experiences of the teachers we interviewed. In the same way as other minority teachers, Aboriginal teachers saw themselves as role models and advocates drawing upon their own families and experiences of oppression as a source of inspiration for their teaching and interactions with students.

The context in which all teachers carry out their professional roles concerning the goal for equity, especially those teachers who identify as Aboriginal people, is immensely challenging. While some of these initiatives have been stressful, they also have been enriching, productive and positive. Teachers relayed many successful interventions and strategies that they had participated in or witnessed and felt that their presence in the schools was having an overall positive impact. The system as a whole needs to understand the larger socio-political context that frames their experience as teachers. Aboriginal teachers, like all other teachers responsible for the implementation of Core Curriculum, need proper administrative and professional support to carry out their work in the classroom and in the broader context of a collegial environment in the school. The professional relationships in a school may require mediation.

Change, then, must occur at various levels in the educational system: at a personal level which invites an examination of one's thinking and attitudes; at an inter-personal level which explores the nature of our relationships and communication; and at an institutional level which invites a critical examination of the systems and structures in place. Ultimately, the efforts we make individually and collectively to create new relationships must also be supported within the confines of our homes, our communities, our organizations, and our province. In the context of the changing demographics in this province and the future economic and social well being of this province, those in positions of authority and leadership must assume important roles in facilitating these crucial changes in education. As Aboriginal teachers so aptly pointed out, change is everyone's responsibility.

Summary of Recommendations

We recommend that Saskatchewan Education:

- **assume leadership in coordinating and sustaining a critical dialogue of the efficacy of its policies and directives concerning Aboriginal education;**
- **collaboratively clarify the purpose of Aboriginal education and its goals, and the role and responsibility teachers and administrators have in addressing these goals,**
- **involve Aboriginal people through their organizations, elders, and communities;**
- **continue efforts to diversify the teaching population and boards of education,**
- **pay particular attention to how racism shapes and influences responses to Aboriginal education and educators,**
- **through its partnerships continue to support and promote professional growth opportunities in the areas of equity,**
- **explore further with school divisions and with the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation through its structures, opportunities for networking among Aboriginal teachers and like minds where there are significant numbers of Aboriginal teachers,**
- **provide Aboriginal consultants as a means of**

providing on-going support to school division, schools and teachers in the implementation of the initiatives for Indian and Metis Education in Core Curriculum,

- collaboratively establish how Aboriginal content is to be situated in curriculum, and what programs and initiatives can best support these directives,
- develop a strategy to address the issue surrounding appropriate protocols and sensitivities to the appropriation of Indigenous knowledge in relation to what constitutes Native Studies,
- create partnerships with Aboriginal communities and elders to facilitate teachers' access to Indigenous knowledge and skills,
- provide funding for research and resources to enhance Aboriginal language programming,
- encourage through their partnerships with universities the development of Aboriginal languages as an area of study for specialization which includes courses in linguistics, literature and language teaching methodology.
- communicate the resulting collective understanding and the purposes of Aboriginal educational initiatives not only to administrators and teachers but also to the broader public to help create awareness and support for the proposed changes,
- develop regular review mechanisms to monitor how equity initiatives are translated into practices.

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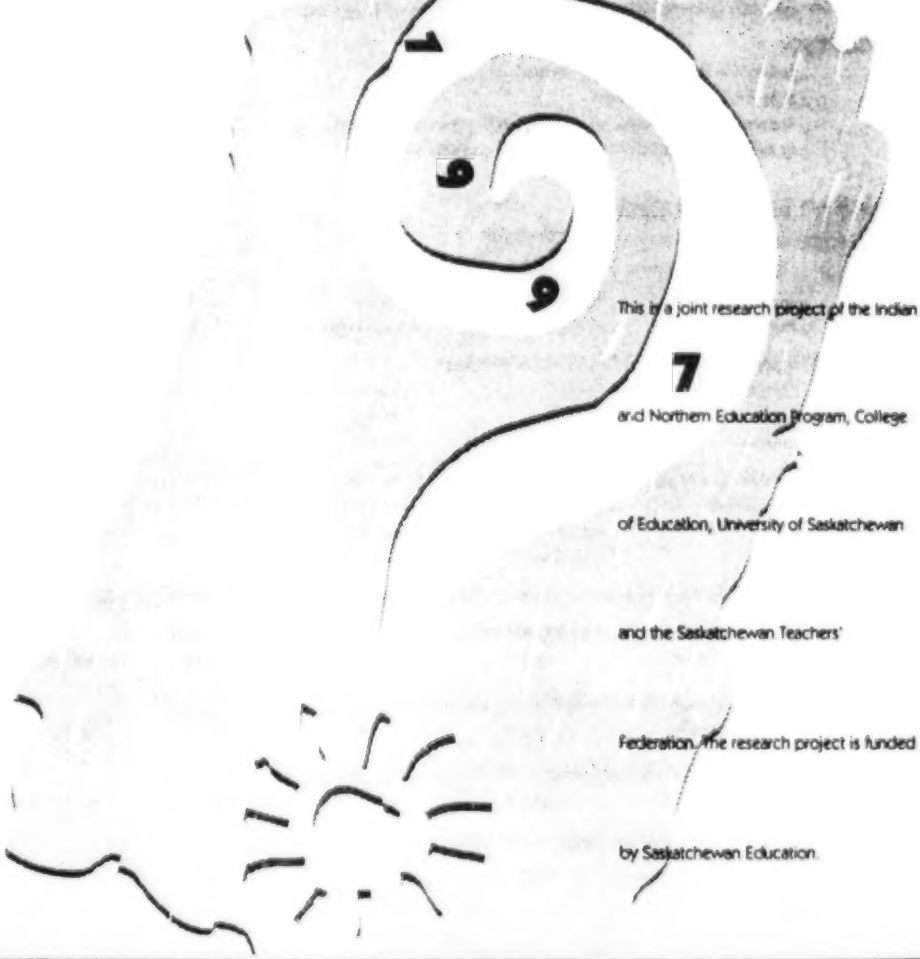
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Appendices

Appendix A

Teacher Questionnaire

Okiskinahamekewak - *Aboriginal Teachers in Saskatchewan's Public Schools: Responding to the Flux*



This is a joint research project of the Indian and Northern Education Program, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation. The research project is funded by Saskatchewan Education.

Personal Demographics

CODE NUMBER: _____

Please circle all that apply or fill in the requested information.

1. What is your First Nations affiliation(s):

A) ASSINIBOINE C) DAKOTA E) MÉTIS G) OTHER: _____
B) CREE D) DENE F) SAULTEAUX

2) Which type of community were you largely raised in?

A) ON-RESERVE C) OFF-RESERVE/NONMÉTIS RURAL COMMUNITY
B) MÉTIS COMMUNITY D) OFF-RESERVE/NONMÉTIS URBAN COMMUNITY

Now circle one item in the following questions.

3) Which type of community do you now reside in?

A) ON-RESERVE - WHICH RESERVE?_____
B) OFF-RESERVE/NON-MÉTIS RURAL
C) OFF-RESERVE/NON-MÉTIS URBAN
D) MÉTIS COMMUNITY - WHICH? _____

4) Which category below fits your age:

A) 20-29 YEARS C) 40-49 YEARS E) 60 PLUS
B) 30-39 YEARS D) 50-59 YEARS

5) Are you:

A) MALE B) FEMALE

Family Status

Again, circle the items that represents your family status today and add any requested information.

6) Are you:

A) SINGLE WITH DEPENDENTS (HOW MANY? ____)
B) SINGLE WITHOUT DEPENDENTS
C) LIVING WITH SPOUSE/PARTNER AND WITH DEPENDENTS (HOW MANY? ____)
D) LIVING WITH SPOUSE/PARTNER BUT WITHOUT DEPENDENTS

First Nation Language Skills

Circle all that apply or fill in the requested information.

7) What, if any, First Nations language(s) do you speak?

A) ASSINIBOINE C) DAKOTA E) MICHIF G) OTHER: _____
B) CREE D) DENE F) SAULTEAUX

8) What language is comfortably your first language?

A) ASSINIBOINE D) DENE G) ENGLISH
B) CREE E) MICHIF H) FRENCH
C) DAKOTA F) SAULTEAUX I) OTHER: _____

9) What language(s) do you use with your children or spouse?

A) ASSINIBOINE D) DENE G) ENGLISH
B) CREE E) MICHIF H) FRENCH
C) DAKOTA F) SAULTEAUX I) OTHER: _____

Circle the word that represents your personal assessment of your skill level in a First Nations language.

10) How would you rate your **understanding** ability of a First Nations language?

NONE	SOME	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT
1	2	3	4	5

11) How would you rate your **speaking** fluency ability in a First Nations language?

NONE	SOME	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT
1	2	3	4	5

12) How would you rate your **reading** ability in a First Nations language?

NONE	SOME	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT
1	2	3	4	5

13) How would you rate your **writing** ability in a First Nations language?

NONE	SOME	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT
1	2	3	4	5

Previous Schooling

Circle all that apply or fill in the requested information.

14) What type of school have you attended and/or graduated?

A) BAND-OPERATED SCHOOL
i) Attended ii) Graduated

B) PROVINCIAL SCHOOL
i) Attended ii) Graduated

C) FEDERAL OR BOARDING SCHOOL
i) Attended ii) Graduated

D) PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOL
i) Attended ii) Graduated

E) VOCATIONAL SCHOOL
i) Attended ii) Graduated

F) UNIVERSITY
i) Attended ii) Graduated

15) What university degree(s) do you currently hold

A) BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A)

B) BACHELORS OF EDUCATION (B.ED)

C) POST GRADUATE DEGREE (PGD)

D) MASTERS (M.ED OR ED.M)

E) DOCTORATE (ED.D OR PH.D)

F) OTHER _____

16) If you have received a graduate degree, please indicate your thesis, project, or dissertation title:

_____

Teacher Education

Circle all that apply or fill in the requested information

17) From which program or college did you receive your teacher education?

A) ITEP (INDIAN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM, U OF S)

B) NORTEP (NORTHERN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM)

C) SUNTEP (SASKATCHEWAN URBAN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM)

D) NAME OF OTHER TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM OR COLLEGE

_____

18) What status did you enter the program or college?

A) DIRECT ENTRY

B) MATURE ENTRY

19) What type of teaching certificate do you now hold?

A) STANDARD CERTIFICATE

B) PROFESSIONAL A CERTIFICATE

C) OTHER? _____

Formal Language Training

Circle all that apply or fill in the requested information.

20) Have you had any formal language training in a First Nations language ?

A) YES B) NO

If yes, in which language

A) ASSINIBOINE C) DAKOTA E) MICHIF G) OTHER: _____

B) CREE D) DENE F) SAULTEAUX

21) Have you had any formal language training in English as a Second Language?

A) YES B) NO

Employment Information

22) What type of employment did you acquire the first year after graduation from university with your teaching degree?

_____

23) What types of teaching experience have you had?
Fill in the following grid with the number of years of teaching within each of the given grade levels and indicate the type of school in which this experience was gained)

A) LEVEL(S)	B) NUMBER OF YEARS	C) TYPE OF SCHOOL				
		FEDERAL	BAND	PROVINCIAL PUBLIC	SEPARATE	PRIVATE
I) PRIMARY						
II) MIDDLE						
III) JR. HIGH						
IV) SECONDARY						
V) COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY						
VI) TOTAL NUMBER OF YEARS						

Circle all that apply or fill in the requested information.

24) Have you taught Native Studies?
A) YES B) NO

25) What is your current employment as a teacher?
Example,

A) GRADE(S)	B) SUBJECTS	C) LENGTH OF TIME	D) TYPE OF SCHOOL
Grade 7	All subjects	3 years	Seperate

A) GRADE(S)	B) SUBJECTS	C) LENGTH OF TIME	D) TYPE OF SCHOOL

26) Would you be willing to be interviewed by the Aboriginal researchers of this study?
A) YES B) NO

27) If you were invited, would you be willing to participate in talking circles on the findings of the first phase of this study?
A) YES B) NO

28) What central issues or questions do you think should be explored further in the interviews or talking circles related to this study of Aboriginal teachers' attitudes and experiences?

Thank you for completing this survey

I am aware that **by signing my name below**

- that the identification of my name is merely to alert the researchers that I am willing to discuss further the possibility of my being interviewed further for the study;
- that my name will not appear in any public documents or reports without my prior consent, unless I choose to release my name and identity;
- that the information provided here will be reported in the study as part of the demographics on Aboriginal teachers teaching in the provincial school systems;
- that the researchers who are engaged in this study will guarantee my confidentiality as a participant in this study; and
- that **if I do not sign my name**, the researchers may use the information herewith provided, but I do not wish to be interviewed for the study)

Signed _____ Date _____

Name (PLEASE PRINT) _____

Phone Number(s) WORK _____ HOME _____ FAX _____

Mailing Address _____

_____

Appendix B

Ethics on Human Experimentation: Letter of Approval

UNIVERSITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ON ETHICS IN HUMAN EXPERIMENTATION

(BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES)

NAME: Dr. Marie Battiste, Rita Bouvier and Verna St. Denis
Educational Foundations, Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation

EC# 97-43

DATE: March 11, 1997

The University Advisory Committee on Ethics in Human Experimentation (Behavioral Sciences) has reviewed your study, "Okiskinahamakewak Aboriginal Teachers in Saskatchewan Public Schools: Responding to the Flux" (97-43).

1. Your study has been APPROVED.
2. Any significant changes to your protocol should be reported to the Director of Research Services for Committee consideration in advance of its implementation.
3. The term of this approval is for 3 years.

Michael Owen, Secretary
for the University Advisory Committee
on Ethics in Human Experimentation, Behavioral Science

Please direct all correspondence to:

Michael Owen, Secretary
UACEHE, Behavioral Science
Office of Research Services
University of Saskatchewan
Room 210 Kirk Hall, 117 Science Place
Saskatoon, SK S7N 5C8

Appendix C

Letters to Directors

Board of Education
Address
Postal Code

Dear Board of Education:

Having been recently selected by Saskatchewan Education to conduct a study of the experiences and attitudes of Aboriginal teachers in provincial schools, we are writing to inform you of our project and to request your permission to contact the schools in your division for the purposes of identifying Aboriginal teachers to invite them to participate in our study. Our research project is one of five focussing on Indian and Metis Education. One of the priorities identified by Saskatchewan Education's Indian and Metis Advisory Committee is research to inform the on-going efforts to effect change as stated in the Indian and Metis Education Policy adopted in 1989 (Indian and Metis Action Plan, 1995).

There are two research projects focussing on Aboriginal teachers; for this reason, both research teams will maintain communication so as not to overwhelm and overextend the same teachers. Our project makes an effort to contact all the Aboriginal teachers teaching in the system, thereby establishing a data base on Aboriginal teachers in the provincial system. A brief description of our project and information about the team is attached.

We would like to make contact with teachers as soon as possible to inform them of our project and to invite their participation. Your timely response is appreciated. For the purposes of this study Aboriginal teachers will include individuals assigned to the classroom and those who are assigned administrative positions.

We hope that our work will contribute to the on-going dialogue that is taking place to enhance education for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in this province.

We would like to add that one of our members, Verna St. Denis, is concurrently conducting her doctoral research with a select group of Aboriginal teachers and will be seeking separate approval from selected boards of education for her work.

Respectfully Yours,

Rita Bouvier (on behalf of the research team)

Appendix D

Letters to Teacher

Teacher
Address
Postal Code

Dear Teacher

Saskatchewan Education has recently awarded a grant to our research team to conduct a study of the experiences and attitudes of Aboriginal teachers in provincial schools. We are writing to invite you to participate in this important project. A brief overview of the project and information about the research team is enclosed.

There are three phases to the project. The first phase involves the completion of the enclosed survey form which will provide a cultural and professional profile of Aboriginal teachers in the province. The second phase will involve extended interviews with a representative sample of teachers. The final phase will involve talking circles to elaborate and discuss key issues that are raised in the interviews with teachers.

Please indicate which aspects of the research project you are willing to participate in, by indicating your choices in the enclosed consent form.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, the study as described to you or the survey form please contact either Rita Bouvier (306-373-1660), Marie Battiste (306- 966-7576) or Verna St Denis (415-497-2203). Your prompt reply is appreciated.

Respectfully Yours,

Appendix E

Information about the Study

Okiskinahamakewak - Aboriginal Teachers In Saskatchewan's Public Schools: Responding To The Flux

Description:

This qualitative study will examine the experiences and relationships Aboriginal teachers have within the provincial system that promote or limit their professional growth and development. Specifically, the study seeks to understand what their visions for teaching are, the professional models they draw upon, how they perceive their roles and responsibilities within the school as they affect Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students and what promotes or limits their effectiveness as teachers.

The study will include a literature review of Aboriginal teachers' experiences in teaching, initial assumptions and expectations of Aboriginal teachers; address the issue of cultural heterogeneity among Aboriginal teachers; explore the emerging literature on Aboriginal epistemology and Aboriginal world view; and finally, the limitations and barriers to effective performance of minority teachers within the educational system.

The methodology will include a general survey of Aboriginal teachers, interviews with a selected representative sample currently teaching in the system and talking circles to explore and clarify the issues raised through the interviews. The results will be shared with a wider audience with the intent of developing recommendations to inform policy, practice and teacher education. (This latter activity is not part of the research project.)

Researchers:

Dr. Marie Battiste is Associate Professor with the Indian and Northern Education Program, Education Foundations at the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan. Marie's professional interests involve Aboriginal languages, knowledge and learning. Marie is Mi'kmaq.

Ms. Verna St. Denis is Assistant Professor with the Indian and Northern Education Program, Educational Foundations at the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan. She is currently on leave completing a doctoral program at Stanford university. Her research interests are cultural identity formation and maintenance. Verna is Cree/Metis.

Ms. Rita Bouvier is an Executive Assistant in Professional Development with the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation. Rita's professional interests are concerned with the goal for equity and social justice in public education. Rita is Metis/Cree.

P.S.

Verna, Marie and I are delighted to have been selected as researchers for this study. The importance of the study as we have outlined to Saskatchewan Education is to address what we see as four gaps in the current literature. These areas are: to expand the literature on experiences of Aboriginal teachers-to date most of the focus has been on teachers teaching in remote, northern, isolated and predominantly Aboriginal communities, to provide a balanced view of the contexts in which Aboriginal teachers work, to test the existing bias in research that assumes relative homogeneity among Aboriginal teachers and finally to balance the existing limitation in current research that characteristically employs non-Aboriginal researchers.

To respect the confidentiality of your participation and/or anonymity we have established the following procedures : this mailing is being forwarded by the STF through University letterhead; completed surveys will be forwarded to the University in the stamped, self addressed envelope.

We sincerely hope that you are able to take part in one or all aspects of the study.

Appendix F

Summary of Frequencies – Aboriginal Teacher Questionnaire

1 What is your First Nations affiliation(s):

Assiniboine	1				
Cree	34	Metis	77		
Dakota	0	Saulteaux	6	Total Response:	106
Dene	4	Other	1		

2. Which type of community were you largely raised in:

On Reserve	7	Off-reserve/nonMetis	RURAL	26
Metis Community	30	Off-reserve/nonMetis	URBAN	43

3. Which type of community do you now reside in:

On Reserve	3	Off-reserve/nonMetis	RURAL	14
Metis Community	28	Off-reserve/nonMetis	URBAN	59

4. Which category below fits your age:

20-29	13	30-39	51	40-49	33
50-59	8	60+	1		

5. Are you: M 35 F 68

Family Status

6. Are you:

Single with dependants	21	Living with partner with dependants	55
Single without dependents	15	Living with partner without dependants	15

Average number of dependants: 2.24

First Nations Language Skills

7. What, if any, First Nations language(s) do you speak:

Assiniboine	0	Dene	3	Other	0
Cree	19	Michif	10		
Dakota	1	Saulteaux	4		

8. What language is comfortably your first language:

Assiniboine	0	Dene	2	English	87
Cree	9	Michif	7	French	5
Dakota	0	Saulteaux	1	Other	0

9. What language(s) do you use with your children or spouse:

Assiniboine	0	Dene	2	English	96
Cree	0	Michif	3	French	4
Dakota	0	Saulteaux	0	Other	1

Previous Schooling

14. What type of school have you attended: graduated:

Band Operated	2	Band Operated	0
Provincial	84	Provincial	64
Federal/Boarding	4	Federal/Boarding	0
Private High	8	Private High	5
Vocational	7	Vocational	4
University	96	University	94
Other	0	Other	0

15. What University degree(s) do you currently hold:

Bachelor of Arts	12	Masters (M.Ed./Ed.M.)	1
Bachelor of Education	102	Doctorate (Ed.D./Ph.D.)	0
Post Graduate Degree	8	Other	8

Teacher Education

17. From which program or college did you receive your teacher education:

ITEP	12	NORTEP	21
SUNTEP	39	Other	36

18. What status did you enter the program or college:

Direct Entry	52	Mature Entry	51	Post Academic	0

19. What type of teaching certificate do you now hold:

Standard Certificate	2	Professional A Certificate	102

Formal Language Training

20 Have you had formal training in any of these First Nations Languages:

Assiniboine	0	Dene	3	Other	1
Cree	31	Michif	1		
Dakota	0	Saulteaux	4		

21. Have you had any formal language training in English as a Second Language:

Yes	54	No	52

22. What types of teaching experience have you had:

	Years/Type of School				
Level	Federal	Band	Public	Provincial Separate	Private
Primary	1	1 8	9 8	8	0
Middle	1	7	38	7	0
Jr. High	0	4	23	6	0
Secondary	0	1	24	9	0
College/University	1	0	0	1	0
Total Teaching Yrs:					

24. Have you ever taught Native Studies: Yes 46 No 59

26. Would you be willing to be interviewed by the Aboriginal researchers of this study?
Yes 86 No 19

27. If invited, would you be willing to participate in talking circles on the findings of the first phase of this study:
Yes 78 No 24

Appendix G

Compilation of Survey Data

Table 1.
Teacher Response Rates

Number of Saskatchewan teachers (1996 – 97)	10,134
Number of Self-declared Aboriginal teachers in Saskatchewan in 1996-97 (according to the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation)	315
Number of Aboriginal Teacher Surveys sent to teachers	331
Number of Surveys returned	106 (34%)
Number of Surveys indicating interest in being interviewed	86 (81%)
Number of Surveys indicating interest in participating in talking circles	78 (73%)
Number of Surveys providing additional written comments of issues to be further explored in the study	58 (55%)

Table 2.
Teacher Affiliation:

Metis	63	(60%)
First Nations teachers	27	(25%)
Metis and First Nations teachers	14	(13%)
Unspecified	2	(2%)
Total	106	(100%)

Table 3.
Community Where Teachers were Raised

On-reserve	7	(7%)
Off-reserve or non-Metis rural	26	(25%)
Off-reserve or non-Metis urban	43	(41%)
Number of Metis community	30	(28%)
Total	106	(100%)

Table 4.
Teacher Residence Today

On-reserve	3	(2%)
Off-reserve or non-Metis rural	14	(13%)
Off-reserve or non-Metis urban	59	(56%)
Number of Metis community	28	(26%)
Undeclared	2	(2%)
Total	106	(100%)

Table 5.
Aboriginal Teacher Age Ranges in Saskatchewan

20 – 30 years	13	(12%)
30 – 39	51	(48%)
40 – 49	33	(31%)
50 – 59	8	(8%)
60+	1	(1%)
Total	106	(100%)

Table 6.
Teacher Gender Profile

Male	35	(35%)
Female	68	(64%)
Undeclared	3	(3%)
Total	106	(100%)

Table 7.
Teacher Family Status

Single with dependents (average 2.2 dependents)	21	(20%)
Single without dependents	15	(14%)
Living with spouse and with dependents (average 2.24 dependents)	55	(52%)
Living with spouse but without dependents	15	(14%)
Total	106	(100%)

Table 8.
Teacher Language Skills: English and First Nations

Speak English	78	(74%)
Speak a First Nations Language	28	(26%)
Total	106	(100%)

Table 8a.
First Nations Language Spoken

Assiniboine	0	
Michif	10	(27%)
Cree	19	(51%)
Saulteaux	4	(11%)
Dakota	1	(3%)
Dene	3	(8%)
Total	37	(100%)

Table 9.
Teacher Language Choice (Most Comfortable Language Used)

English	81	(76%)
Undeclared	12	(11%)
Cree	8	(8%)
Michif	2	(2%)
Dene	1	(1%)
Salteaux	1	(1%)
French	1	(1%)
Assiniboine	0	
Dakota	0	

Table 10.
Teacher Language use With Children or Spouse

Assiniboine	0
Saulteaux	0
Cree	0
English	96 (91%)
Dakota	0
French	4 (4%)
Dene	2 (1%)
German	1 (<1%)
Michif	3 (3%)
Total	106 ((100%)

Table 11.
Teachers Self Rating of their Aboriginal Language Skills (percentages in parentheses, out of 106 respondents)

	None	Some	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Understanding	36 (34)	41 (40)	6 (5)	14 (13)	9 (8)
Speaking	51 (48)	31 (29)	10 (9)	8 (8)	6 (6)
Reading	63 (60)	29 (27)	9 (8)	5 (5)	0
Writing	73 (69)	21 (19)	5 (5)	7 (7)	0

Table 12.
Type of School Attended by Teachers /or/ graduating school

	Attended	Graduated
Band Operated	2 (2%)	0
Provincial school	84 (79%)	64 (60%)
Federal or boarding school	4 (4%)	0
Private high school	8 (7%)	5 (5%)
Vocation school	7 (7%)	4 (4%)
University	96 (91%)	94 (89%)

Table 13.
Number of Teacher University Degrees Held In Sample

Bachelor of Arts	12
Doctorate	0
Bachelor of Education	102
Honours Native Studies	1
Bachelor of Science	2
Bachelor of Music	1
Post Graduate Diploma	8
Bachelor of Social Work	1
Masters	1
Masters of Business Administration	1

Table 14.
Teacher Degree Granting Program / College

ITEP	12	(11%)
NORTEP	21	(20%)
SUNTEP	39	(37%)
Total TEP	**72**	**(67%)**
Other (including the regular teaching education degree program at the universities)	36	(33%)
Total (note: 2 teachers hold both BA and BED Degrees)	*108	(100%)

Table 15.
Teacher Education: Entry Status

Direct Entry	52	(49%)
Mature Entry	51	(48%)
Post Academic		0
Undeclared	3	(3%)
Total	106	(100%)

Table 16.
Type of Teaching Certificates Held Today

Standard certificate	2	(2%)
Professional A certificate	102	(96%)
Other	3	(2%)
Total	*107	(100%)

Table 17.
Teachers Holding Formal Language Training in a First Nations Language

Assiniboine	0	
Cree	31	(29%)
Dakota	0	
Dene	3	(3%)
Michif	1	(<1%)
Saulteaux	4	(4%)
German	1	(<1%)

Table 18.
Teachers With ESL Training

52 (49%) of the teachers have No English as a Second Language (ESL) training	
54 (51%) of the teachers have ESL Training	

Table 19.
First Employment after Graduation

Classroom Teacher	86	(81%)
Substitute Teacher	6	(6%)
Contract Teacher	3	(3%)
Other	11	(10%)

Table 20a.
Teaching Experience by Grade Level and Institution Type

	Primary	Middle	Junior High	Secondary	College/ University	Total
Federal	5	5	0	0	2	7.5
Band	2	2	4	1.5	0	8.5
Public	6	5	7	9	2	2.9
Separate	12	6	3	9	4	30.4
Private	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	25	13.5	13	19.5	4.4	

Table 21.
Teachers with Native Studies Experience

- 46% of the teachers have this experience

Table 22.
Current Teacher Employment in Saskatchewan Public Schools

Grade Level	Males	Females	Overall Total
K – 6	7 (20%)	41 (60%)	48 (45%)
6 – 9	8 (23%)	8 (12%)	16 (15%)
9 – 12	11 (31%)	8 (12%)	19 (18%)
K – 8	1 (3%)	3 (4%)	4 (4%)
K – 12	1 (3%)	3 (4%)	4 (4%)
Other	3 (9%)	2 (3%)	5 (5%)
Undeclared	4 (11%)	3 (3%)	7 (7%)
Blank			3 (3%)
Total	36	68	106 (100%)

Appendix H

Letters of Consent to be Interviewed
Consent To Participate

I _____, agree to participate in the study "Okiskinahamakewak" Aboriginal Teachers in Saskatchewan Public Schools: Responding to the State of Flux funded by Saskatchewan Education and developed by the research team of Verna St.Denis, Rita Bouvier and Marie Battiste. I know that I may decline to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time, and will inform the researchers of such a decision. I understand that the purpose of the study is to examine the professional experiences of Aboriginal teachers in the province.

I am willing to participate in the following aspects of the study: (please check the appropriate boxes)

❒ the interviews;

❒ talking circles, if selected.

I hereby consent to participate in the study as I have indicated above.

_____

_____

Name of Participant _____

Date _____

Appendix I

Talking Circle Ethics
Participation in the Talking Circle

Participants will be invited in the context of the interviews to participate in the talking circles organized to verify the preliminary findings of the research project which has been given to them in written summary format and to discuss further with the researchers the issues raised by participants in their interviews.

The researchers will review for themselves and the participants the purpose, the value of the talking circle, and the guidelines for participation in the talking circle format to be used in this phase of the research project. The key points emphasized will be:

1. Purpose: Our purpose in the use of the talking circle in this phase of the project is to share our preliminary findings with the participants and to deepen our understanding of the issues raised in the first phase of the project.

2. Value of the Talking Circle: The talking circle defines the structure for our interactions and discussions. The circle represents connectedness and relatedness of all things.

   The unique experiences and perspectives that every individual brings to the circle is honored and respected. Every contribution brings truth to our understanding of the issue under discussion. A stone which will be passed around to each person as s/he speaks will symbolize the right and the responsibility to speak.

3. Guidelines:
   - the stone will follow the sun's path around the circle.
   - the holder of the stone has the right to speak. S/he can express opinions, make analytic statements, describe a personal experience or share the emotions s/he is experiencing.
   - participants speak to the issue under discussion and not directly to comments of another participant.

- participants agree to a norm of confidentiality regarding the specifics of what is shared in the circle.
- the researchers will act as the facilitators to ensure that the norms of the talking circle are observed.
- the session will last approximately 2 hours.

4. Introduction to the discussion: We will open with a prayer, led by the elder of the group. The researchers will select a first speaker who will offer greetings, purpose of the talking circle, offer guidelines for the talking circle and open with her first comments. She will remind the participants of the confidential nature of the session, and that the session will be aimed at clarifying issues and offer some guidance to the participants for how they might resolve these issues given the collective mind of the group.